

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS

The LAE Voice

THE VOICE OF LOUISIANA EDUCATORS



SUMMER
EDITION
2026

IN THIS ISSUE



ADVOCATING FOR EDUCATION

Updates on policy and legislation impacting public education in Louisiana.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating outstanding educators making a difference across our state.



CLASSROOM SUCCESS

Innovative strategies and inspiring stories from Louisiana classrooms.



GROW • LEAD • INSPIRE

Professional development opportunities and leadership resources for educators.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Conferences, workshops, and important dates to know.

*Stronger Together
Better for Students*

UNITED TO SUPPORT EDUCATORS.
COMMITTED TO SUPPORT STUDENT **SUCCESS.**



From the

PRESIDENT'S DESK

D'Shay Oaks, President

School's Out for **SUMMER!!!**

I know many of you had a tough time this school year. Just know there are people outside of schools fighting for you every day.

How can you make a difference in your job...you can advocate for yourself and your co-workers, tell your story to anyone who will listen, and be a leader at your school. Change happens when we all work together!

What to do this summer?

1. Rest
2. Relax
3. Mentally unwind
4. Enjoy your family and friends
5. Try something new (hobby or travel)

"Wishing you a summer filled with peace, joy, and the opportunity to recharge."

From the VICE PRESIDENT

Cynthia Henderson of Caddo



Greetings LAE members,

2025-2026 school year has ended. What do we do now? Keep fighting; keep growing our locals and the Union! Keep engaging in our LAE events and meetings. Go Vote! It is time to speak out and exercise our constitutional right to vote. As NEA President Becky Pringle said, "Educators teach students that voting is both a responsibility of citizenship and a right we must continue to uphold. People died to protect and advance this right." When we vote, we take advantage of our opportunity to express our opinions and choose representatives who will make decisions on our behalf. Now, more than ever-we must vote! It is through this democratic process that the collective voice of our members are heard! Casting our vote is our opportunity, no matter where we come from or what we believe, our voices need to be heard loud and clear. We must elect leaders who align with LAE values. We will not be silenced. Cast your vote. Your voice MATTERS! You make a difference!

In Solidarity,
Cynthia Henderson
LAE Vice-President

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR LAE UNISERV DIRECTORS



Caleb Holmes
UniServ Director Region 1
Cell: 225.235.2415
cholmes@lae.org
www.lae.org



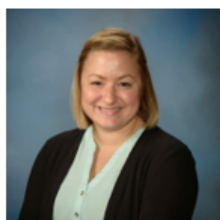
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Samuel Baynes
UniServ Director Region 2
Cell: 337.516.8880
sbaynes@lae.org
www.lae.org



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



Shelly Byron
UniServ Director Region 4
Cell: 225.368.7293
sbyron@lae.org
www.lae.org



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



Grant Shreiner
UniServ Director Region 3
Cell: 225.615.6256
gshreiner@lae.org
www.lae.org



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MEET GINGER ABNEY KINDERGARTEN TEACHER BIENVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Ginger Abney is a native of Arcadia, Louisiana. She attended Crawford Elementary School, and she is now an educator there sowing seeds into her community. Her mother, grandmother, and great-aunt instilled a passion and zeal for education into her at a very early age. She values reading, knowledge, and teaching. Ginger unequivocally demonstrates that teaching is not only her passion but also her purpose. She thanks God daily for every gift and ability He's given to her and gives Him all of the glory.

She has been teaching kindergarten for nine years. She also serves as: the Parent and Family Liaison, a Mentor Teacher, the Kindergarten Lead Teacher, a Master/Lead Teacher, an LER Observer, an after-school tutor, a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, a K-2nd Content Leader, the elementary and high school coronation choreographer, and a Progress Monitoring Kindergarten Interventionist.

In 2023, Ginger made history by becoming the first person in the parish to become a Louisiana Teacher of the Year Semifinalist. This year, she made history again by becoming the first person in the parish to receive the "National Life Group Life Changer of the Year Spirit Award".

When students leave Ginger's classroom, they are very well equipped and prepared for the first grade. Her methods always prove to be effective, engaging, and exciting. Students have grown from low achievement to consistently demonstrating high achievement. Her state progress monitoring scores are absolutely outstanding. For instance, only 28% of her students were on benchmark when they arrived in August. By April, over 80% of them were on benchmark, and 100% of her students' scores improved. Ginger believes that teaching is her ministry. Her favorite quote is "Students do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

2026 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

HB196 - PASSED

(Personal Days) Increases the annual personal leave granted to certain teachers from two to four days from the ten sick days.

HB 283 - PASSED

(Teacher Shield Act) would strengthen protections for school employees by ensuring clearer responses, appropriate follow-up, and access to the time and care needed to recover, including medical and psychological support.

HB 818 - PASSED

(Assessment) It would require public posting of state and local assessments, district-by-district reporting by the Louisiana Department of Education, and parent notification when schedules are posted or changed. ****NOTE:** This leads to another bill for next year to hopefully cut the amount of testing done in the state. In the fall be on the lookout for ways you can help in collecting data. ******

SB 157 - PASSED

(Paid Parental Leave) Provides six weeks of paid parental leave at 100% of base pay for eligible school employees, covering birth, pregnancy loss, adoption, and foster placement, without requiring them to use their existing leave first.

SB 312 - PASSED

(Payroll Deduction) More details will come later.



In April, members of the East Feliciana Association of Educators traveled to Baton Rouge for a meeting of the Louisiana House Education Committee to testify against Senate Bill 82, which would have stripped elected school boards from making scheduling decisions that meet the best needs of their communities, their students, and their educators. Members also partnered with other locals to engage in outreach to legislators across the state. These efforts were part of a larger campaign designed to build member capacity in advocacy and organizing domains of the NEA Leadership Competency Framework. Through sustained member engagement, strategic advocacy, and

collaboration across local associations, Senate Bill 82 was halted before reaching a full House vote, preserving local school boards' authority to make decisions that best serve their communities. Pictured here is Schokeata Matthews, master teacher at Clinton Elementary School and vice president of the East Feliciana Association of Educators, testifying before the House Education Committee.



Make the most of your new **MEMBERSHIP!**

Find out how NEA Member Benefits can help you:

- Reduce student debt
- Save on travel and everyday items
- Get insurance that fits your schedule
- Sign up for free life insurance
- Plan ahead for retirement

And so much more!

Scan below
to learn more



nea *Member
Benefits*



TERREBONNE PARISH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Building a Bright Future for Every Student

EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT



Taisha D. White Named 2025 School Social Worker of the Year

*Recognized by the National Association of
Social Workers - Louisiana Chapter (NASW-LA)*

Terrebonne Parish School District is proud to celebrate **Taisha D. White, IMSW, C-SSWS**, who has been named the **2025 School Social Worker of the Year** by the National Association of Social Workers Louisiana Chapter (NASW-LA).

Before earning the statewide honor, Taisha was first recognized as the 2025 Regional School Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers Houma/Thibodaux Region, highlighting her outstanding work and dedication in our local community. Ms. White currently works for TPSD at our T.A.P.P.S. (Terrebonne Alternative Program Placement Site).

This Prestigious award recognizes a school social worker exemplifies the profession's highest values and achievements through exceptional service, leadership, and impact in Louisiana's school systems. Recipients demonstrate innovation in their work, make meaningful contributions to students and families, and strengthen the connection between schools, homes, and the community.

Taisha's dedication, leadership, and commitment to supporting students and families truly embody the spirit of this award. Her work continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of those she serves.

Congratulations,

Taisha, on this well-deserved recognition!

Congratulations!

2025 NASW-LA
School Social Worker of the Year



Taisha D. White, LMSW, C-SSWS  nasw

EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

The School Social Worker of the Year Award recognizes professionals who exemplify the highest standards of the social work profession through:

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE
LEADERSHIP
INNOVATION
COMMUNITY IMPACT
STUDENT AND FAMILY
ADVOCACY

*Strengthening the connection between
schools, homes, and the community while
creating opportunities for student success.*

*Thank you, Taisha, for your unwavering commitment to
students, families, and the Terrebonne Parish Community!*



MESSAGE FROM ST. JOHN ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT BRANDY NORA AND LAE BOARD MEMBER DERRON COOK



SJAE is in full swing during negotiations. With the support of NEA and LAE, SJAE President Brandy Nora and Past President Derron Cook—both LAE Board members—are out in the community letting educators and residents know that we love our educators. As one of only five districts with a collective bargaining agreement, we are fighting not only to maintain our current contract but also to improve working conditions within the district.

St. John Parish community, invite friends and neighbors to join our cause. Protect students and educators by renewing the 40-year-old contract between educators and the school board. SJAE thanks everyone for standing with educators as we fight for the schools our students deserve: <http://lil.ms/oybh/9ywhbv>

LAE STRATEGIC PLANNING

JUNE 5-6, 2026

"LAE members deserve a union that is the most powerful fighting force for public education in the South, is strong in membership, influential in policy, and driven by the leadership and needs of members. When we're talking about education in Louisiana, LAE is the clearest, most influential, and most trusted voice."

- Vision for LAE -



On June 5-6, the LAE Advisory Committee convened to craft a bold, long-term vision for the affiliate and develop a one-year strategic plan to move LAE toward that vision. The convening was organized around four parts - teaming, visioning, assessing, and planning - and designed to build shared understanding, identify opportunities and challenges, and establish clear priorities for action. This document captures the key discussions, reflections, and artifacts generated through the convening.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**LEADERSHIP
TRAINING**

6/26 - 6/27

**HOLIDAY
LAE OFFICE
CLOSED**

7/3

**NEA RA 2026
DENVER, CO**

7/4 - 7/7

LABOR DAY

9/7

**BOARD
MEETING**

9/15

**COMMITTEE
MEETING**

9/19

Thank You for Supporting **LOUISIANA EDUCATORS**

The Louisiana Association of Educators is committed to empowering educators, advocating for public education, and ensuring every student has access to a quality learning experience.



TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

CONNECT WITH LAE



8322 One Calais Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70809



225-343-9243
Toll Free: 1-800-256-4523
Fax: 225-343-9272



Website
www.lae.org



Facebook
Louisiana Association of Educators



Email
info@lae.org

LAE ADVOCACY CENTER



1-877-452-3477



advocacycenter@lae.org



D'Shay Oaks, President
Cynthia Henderson, Vice-President
Jeff Sherels, Executive Director

GET INVOLVED

- Attend local and state events
- Participate in professional development opportunities
- Advocate for public education
- Mentor and support fellow educators
- Join your local association and make your voice heard!

Together we are building a stronger future for Louisiana's students.

