

Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

Post Office Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Telephone: (225)342-9818



Commission Staff

Tammy Crain-Waldrop
Researcher

Nanette Normand
Administrative Secretary

MINUTES

May 20, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 20, 2016 in the John J. Hainkel Jr. Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairwoman, Beth Courtney called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Beth Courtney (Chair)
John Alexander
Nancy Beben
Fredell Butler
Peggy Cotogno
Shan Davis
Sheree Blanchard (proxy for Barry Erwin)
Brenda Hodge
Rep. Ed Price
Judge Wendell Manning
Lawrence Narcisse
Kelly Pepper
Deidre Robert
Richard Williams (proxy for Judge Karen Roby)
Robert Travis Scott
Anita Sexton
Judd Jeasonne (proxy for William Stoudt)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sen. Yovvne Dorsey-Colomb (Vice-Ch)
Richard Hartley
Rep. Patrick Jefferson
Polly Johnson
Terry Landry
Pamela Mitchell-Wagner
Sen. Blade Morrish
Lauren Russell
Sarah Turner

STAFF PRESENT

Tammy Crain-Waldrop, Researcher
Nanette Normand, Administrative Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lawrence Narcisse made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2015 meeting, and there being no objection, the minutes were approved.

IV. BUSINESS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

Nanette Normand, Coordinator for the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. This year we passed some legislation to increase our membership. It is SB68 of the 2016RS which is currently sitting on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature. If he doesn't sign it, the bill will go into effect as of tomorrow. SB 68 changes the membership of our council from 21 members to 31 members. In the past there have been 21 members and 21 alternates. Since taking over the council I've found that the alternates are unclear on what their role is and many of them don't participate at all. So after working with the council for the past 2 years and speaking with the members and alternates it was decided to do away with the alternates and increase the membership to ensure that everyone feels as though they are a part of the council. This year the application review committee consisted of five people and there were around 65 applications to be reviewed. And with that Ms. Cotogno will read the names for approval by the commission.

Peggy Cotogno read the recommendations from the review commission for the 2016-2017 Legislative Youth Advisory Council as:

Congressional District 1

Sahar Muhawesh, Allen J. Ellender Memorial High
Sophia Lorusso, Mount Carmel Academy
Isabel Caballero, Mount Carmel Academy

Congressional District 2

Shala Williams, St. James High
Taylor Collins, Isidore Newman High
Ethan Legrand, Jesuit High School of New Orleans

Congressional District 3

Chad Fuselier, Lafayette High
Austin Sarver, North Vermilion High
Joel Thompson, Five Elms Christian Academy

Congressional District 4

Corey Ingersoll, Airline High
Megan Register, Logansport High
Madeline Saucedo, Parkway High

Congressional District 5

Kyra Lewis, J.S. Clark Leadership Academy

Katherine Hall, Ouachita Christian School
Ruby Roberg, West Feliciana High

Congressional District 6

Bailey Scott, Denham Springs High
Katelyn Prescott, Walker High
Andrew Benoit-Naquin, Thibodaux High

At Large Members

Amanda Schwarz, Covington High
Kennedy Andara, Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies
Carson Sanders, St. Frederick Catholic High
Caitlyn Arnold, Ursuline Academy
Manny Bailey, Baton Rouge Magnet High
Paxton dePingre', C.E. Byrd High
Elizabeth Feltner, University Laboratory School
Matthew Fontenot, Kinder High
Nicholas Foster, Northshore High
Desmond LeBlanc, Warren Easton High
Marian Luzier, Walker High
Sarah Procopio, Baton Rouge Magnet High
Tamiko Stroud, Donaldsonville High

Peggy Cotogno made a motion to approve the members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council for the 2016-2017 term, and there being no objection, the members were approved.

Peggy Cotogno gave a brief description of the James Madison Legacy Project. We received a large grant from the U.S. Department of Education for professional development in civics education. We are sharing the funding with Arkansas and over the next 3 years we will receive over \$350,000. This money will be used for the professional development of teachers and teacher training in the civics curriculum "We The People".

Michelle Wall with ABC Angels. In our everyday life we found that there were families below the poverty level who were hard to match up to the resources they needed. On the other hand we found groups in the community who were willing to help. So we formed an organizational committee to link up the families with the various groups who could offer the help needed. We have done things like a Christmas project where disabled children were adopted by a class and provided that child with gifts, clothes, etc. In doing this the children in the classroom learned about disabilities. We did another Christmas project for the elderly in the various churches.

Dawn Birdsong is with Mighty Moms. Our mission is to feed the hungry children in our community. We started in 2011 and received our 501C status and since then we have grown exponentially. We found that there are children out there that are starving daily. These children have a hard time concentrating in schools, they have behavior problems. We are known for our Full Tummy Project which is our backpack program. We pack bags to feed the children on the weekend. In 2011, we gave out 487 bags throughout the school year. This year we delivered 14,491 bags to 44 Livingston Parish schools. We want to continue and see what we can do to

make a difference in these children's family life and help them succeed. The people in Livingston Parish have been so helpful in donating their money, time, food, prayers, whatever is needed in order to help these children. Each Full Tummy bag costs us about \$5.50 so our grocery bill is on average about \$10,000 a month and without fail the community comes through and we always have it. We also feed families who are in crisis by giving them emergency food baskets that will feed a family of 4 for 5 nights for a cost of about \$100.00. We include recipe cards on different ways to prepare the food. The program has not expanded to the summer yet, but we do have a wagon and we go through the neighborhoods and make sandwiches, chicken quesadillas, fruit, and juice boxes and we try to feed those children who are outside and in need of a meal. We are saving up to hopefully get a food truck where we can prepare the food and drive around to feed them.

Rep. Price mentioned a federal program that feeds families and children in the summer. Have you looked into that? In Ascension, the school system administers the program during the summer.

Dawn Birdsong. Several years ago we went to a class and learned about it but by the time the Full Tummy Program is over we are wiped out. So we use the summer to get rejuvenated, although we do know that those children are hungry.

Morgan Robertson gave an update on the back to school program for the senate. Last time I came before you we were in a kind of crisis mode as the National Conference of State Legislators wasn't going to be heading up the program anymore. About a month ago they staffed the program again, although funding is still in question, so it looks like we are back on track. I don't have any new stats for you since last November. Of course the legislature has been a little busy since February with session but there are a number of new senators who are excited to participate in the program.

D'Wayne Bell and Sarah Procopio gave an update to the commission on the activities of LYAC.

Sarah Procopio, LYAC council member, explained the initiative the council took on this year. This year, we introduced SCR 79 with the help of Senator Cortez it passed yesterday. I had the idea to have corporate sponsorship of public infrastructure in Louisiana. DOTD worked with us on the idea and the resolution asks them to study the concept and report back to the legislature on their findings. In March we held a Youth Summit and had a good turnout of high school youth from around the state.

D'Wayne Bell, President of LYAC. Another project we are working on is a video that the council hopes to produce aimed at getting young people engaged in the election process. With this being an election year, we thought it would be most opportune to put out at this time. On June 18th we will have the 3 keys to success which are Why to Vote, How to Vote, and When to Vote. We hope that this video will help to engage young people. We hope to play it online, in schools, and possibly on LPB.

Beth Courtney. I look forward to talking to you about the video and using it in various ways.

Peggy Cotogno announced that D'Wayne Bell is the recipient of the Civics in Action award.

This is an award that is given to a student once a year who has shown civic engagement and giving back to the community. This year we received a nomination from the Baton Rouge Bar Association who was so impressed with Mr. Bell and his work with teen court. Congratulations Mr. Bell!

Fredell Butler. We invite you to consider coming to our open house at Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School which is a new school which is located at the old Redemptorist High School site. This school will require corporate work study for all students. It is a college prep high school. We are very interested in getting the word out so that students who are entering the 9th grade can consider us. Open house will be held on May 22nd, 23rd, and 24th. Anyone who is interested in additional details, please get in contact with me.

Judge Manning. We just recently wrapped up the annual law day activities for this year. The judges in the classroom and the lawyers in the classroom programs conducted their series of presentations to classrooms around the state.

Beth Courtney. On behalf of CABL and LPB we had a meeting in which we anticipate that we will be doing some senatorial debates coming up. We are going to send the proposals out to various universities across the state asking if they would like to be our partner. Part of the proposal is to ensure that students are in the audience and involved. We just completed our young heroes program which we have been doing for over 20 years with the Baton Rouge Rotary which is statewide. The committees selected 8 children who have overcome tremendous difficulties and have succeeded in school, have given back to others and are truly young heroes. On our webpage are their profiles if you want to see how well these young people have done despite their difficulties.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Fredell Butler moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Courtney, Chairwoman

Approved: