

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2020

Louisiana Department of Education

Iowa Room

In attendance: Jennifer Roberts, Jessica Dixon, Breigh Rhodes, Denise Bennet, Robin Dufilho, Dean Blackett, Dinah Maygarden, Ashley Cain, Brenda Nixon, Heather Egger, Pierre LaCaze, Brian Gautreau, Kea Sherman, Christopher Chappell (Present but did not sign in)

LEEC staff present: Thomas Gresham, Venise Ortego

Guests present: Theron Philips for Joey Breaux at LDAF, Morgan Crutcher with the Governor's Office of Coastal Affairs

New Member, Robin Dufilho was introduced and welcomed. Her membership on the commission is pending appointment from her agency. She will replace Matthew Reonas. Members introduced themselves.

- I. **Call to order:** Jennifer Roberts called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm.
- II. **Minutes from prior meeting:** No quorum at this time, so minutes were not approved. Minutes were reviewed.
- III. **LDOE program:** Jill Cowart of LDOE gave a presentation providing an overview of the strategies and initiatives of LA Dept. of Education in relation to LEEC and environmental education as a whole, including high-quality curriculum and STEM career pathways. The PowerPoint presentation was shared with commission members.
Discussion: Jen Roberts raised the need to consider LEEC budget and alignment of goals in relation to the initiatives described by Jill. The LDOE provides extra support for K-12 initiatives. Public education goals should also be encompassed. Venise gave a history of the Environmental Literacy plan, prepared during Jindal Administration but never received governor's approval so cannot be published. There was discussion of a need at this point to re-visit the Strategic Plan. There was also a question regarding the phenomena web site (Heather Egger). Brian reported that there are currently 66 phenomena as a result of the GNOF grant, currently being vetted by Ripple Effect.
- IV. **Financial report:** Venise Ortego provided an overview of the current budget. It was emphasized that the majority of KLB budget is included in the LEEC budget.
- V. **Coordinator's report:** Venise provided the coordinator's report to the Commission. A copy was provided.
- VI. **Business**
 1. **Art & language arts contest committee:** Thomas Gresham reported that the A&LA contest is in progress. Deadline is April 24, 2020.
 2. **Bylaws committee:** Dianne Lindstedt is the coordinator and was not present, so no report was made. However, there is a need to for an update to the Bylaws.
 3. **Grants committee:** Brenda Nixon reported that RFP will be released this week and the deadline for proposals is April 6. More proposals are needed to make the grants program competitive. There

is a budget increase for the grants program, resulting in Education increase to max \$2500 each; Research Max to \$2500 each. Of currently funded grants, all but 2 are actively reporting.

4. **Nominating committee:** Jessica Dixon reported that two nominees for Brenda Walkenhorst's seat for environmental advocacy are Tricia LeBlanc and/or Susan Bergeron. Jennifer announced that she would be rolling off at the end of her term due to work commitments in her new position. Also discussed was the inclusion of a CPRA representative on the Commission. Morgan Crutcher was mentioned as a candidate. This needs to be approved by legislature. Murt Conover at LUMCON has also been approved to replace Craig McClain as BESE representative.
5. **Outreach committee:** Breigh Rhodes reported that LDOE has been asked by the Pisces Foundation for full proposal – to address how to engage non formal education in the state department. This will include conducting landscape surveys to identify gaps and needs in environmental education in the state. It would also include a revision of environmental literacy plan. LDOE will be seeking participation by members if the grant is funded.
6. Strategic planning sub-committee reports: Chris Chappell had to leave before reporting. No report was included.
7. 2020 EE symposium: Jennifer Roberts
 - a. Updates: Jennifer reported that the registration numbers were low – mentioned 12 exhibitors, 7 posters, 39 attendees (15 paid), including presenters. February 14 is early bird deadline. To move ahead, there needs to be at least 75 paid attendees and 20 exhibitors by February 14. If the Symposium is cancelled, presenters will be invited to present at Teacher Leader Summit in May. A discussion about the reasons for the low response took place.
 - b. Subcommittee breakout: Subcommittees did not break out, in the interest of time.
8. 2021 Symposium: Dates for the 2021 symposium were discussed, but not confirmed. Tentative dates are: February 26, 27 or March 5, 6.
9. Vision Setting: Jennifer proposed postponing the vision setting and the commission agreed.

VII. Upcoming meeting dates

May 12, 2020, August 25, 2020 (pending vote), November 10, 2020, February 9, 2021 (tentative)

VIII. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.