

# LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

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## Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

### APPROVED MINUTES

May 12, 2023

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 12, 2023, in House Committee Room 1 at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairman, Judge C. Wendell Manning, 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

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman  
Belinda Davis  
Peggy Cotogno  
Judge Jason Dagate  
Judd Jeansonne  
Representative Barbara Freiberg  
Laura Smith  
Michael Bell  
Mattilyn Karst  
Clarence Copeland  
Keith Leger  
Ron Smith  
Jerry Raehal

##### MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Beth Mizell  
Nancy Toorean

Representative Barry Ivey  
Fredell Butler  
Michael Ince  
Jill Roshto  
Lauren Russell Ladner  
Mackenzie Morgan  
Joel Watson, Jr.  
Claston Bernard

STAFF PRESENT

Ann S. Brown, Senior Analyst  
Lily Dugas, Secretary

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Chairman Manning welcomed everyone and introduced commission staff Lily Dugas and Ann S. Brown. He then asked each member present to briefly introduce themselves.

**IV. PRESENTATIONS**

The chairman stated that the commission would proceed with presentations while waiting for a quorum.

- A. Overview of the program "Crime, Consequences, and the Power of Choice"  
*Witnesses Present: Justice Scott Crichton, Associate Justice, Louisiana Supreme Court*

Judge Manning introduced Justice Crichton. Justice Crichton played a brief video about the fentanyl crisis and discussed the importance of preventing crime and overdose deaths through educating teenagers about the dangers of fentanyl and the consequences of certain crimes. He then described the Judges in the Classroom program and talked about how the program helps educate young people on important topics.

Representative Frieberg and Justice Crichton discussed legislation this year regarding fentanyl and what legislators can do to help address these issues and whether educational resources can be added to curriculums.

Belinda Davis said that she would look at standards for teaching about these topics in schools.

B. Overview of the program "Sudden Impact"

*Witnesses present: Lieutenant Melissa Mater, Louisiana State Police, and Nurse Bridget Gardner, University Medical Center New Orleans*

Judge Manning introduced Lieutenant Melissa Mater and Nurse Bridget Gardner and gave a brief description of the Sudden Impact Program. Lieutenant Mater further described the Sudden Impact program and how it teaches teenagers at high schools about fatal crashes and how they can be prevented. Nurse Gardner then explained how the program has expanded to teach about fentanyl.

Representative Freiberg, Lieutenant Mater, Nurse Gardner discussed what locations the program reaches.

Jerry Raehal, Lieutenant Mater, and Nurse Gardner discussed how the program started in 1999, whether the student outcomes are tracked after high school, whether the program addresses mental health, and social media accounts that the program uses.

C.C. Copeland, Lieutenant Mater, and Nurse Gardner discussed how the program is funded and whether schools bear the cost.

Judge Manning commended the program and thanked Lieutenant Mater and Nurse Gardner for their presentation and hard work.

C. College students' free speech rights and available resources

*Witnesses Present: Joe Cohn, Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression*

Judge Manning introduced Joe Cohn. Joe Cohn discussed the importance of free speech rights at colleges and universities. Mr. Cohn gave examples of how free speech has been squashed on college campuses and explained different types of censorship. He further stressed the importance of preserving free speech and respecting liberties.

Judge Manning and Mr. Cohn discussed free speech information and resources that the foundation has made available to students and faculty.

Belinda Davis and Mr. Cohn discussed legislation in Louisiana surrounding free speech.

Representative Freiberg and Mr. Cohn discussed whether the foundation has worked with legislators and university presidents on free speech legislation.

Judd Jeanson and Mr. Cohn discussed the foundation's stance on attacks on tenure and the difference between public and private institutions when it comes to free speech.

## V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Belinda Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2022. Judge Jason Dagate seconded that motion. There being no objection, the minutes were approved.

## VI. BUSINESS

### **Approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2023-2024 membership on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC)**

*Witnesses present: Megan Bella, Legislative Youth Advisory Council*

Megan Bella read the recommendations from the review commission for the 2023-2024 Legislative Youth Advisory Council as:

#### **Congressional District 1**

Chance McComiskey	Christ Episcopal School
Krista Miller	Mandeville High School
Neal Tandon	Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies

#### **Congressional District 2**

Maria English	Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans
Elsie Poynter	Benjamin Franklin High School
Dylan Rhoton	Brother Martin High School

#### **Congressional District 3**

Arun Cacodcar	Episcopal School of Acadiana
Spencer Croft	Lafayette High School
Lucille Kincade	Central Catholic High School

#### **Congressional District 4**

Olivia Ostendorff	Loyola College Prep
Kate Shaw	C.E. Byrd High School
Vivienne Webb	Caddo Magnet High School

#### **Congressional District 5**

Joe Lewis	Winnfield Senior High School
Easton Smith	Franklinton High School
Loralie Smith	River Oaks School

#### **Congressional District 6**

Emma Bonney	St. Joseph's Academy
Michelle Lee	Baton Rouge Magnet High School
Benjamin Ray	Walker High School

**At-Large Members**

Samuel Adjei	University Laboratory School
Avery Aymond	Port Barre High School
Rylee Beaudion	Alexandria Senior High School
Phoebe Fannin	Zachary High School
Sarah Heebe	Metairie Park Country Day School
Analyce Jeane	North Caddo Magnet High School
Vaishnavi Kumbala	Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies
Shashank Nanjundiah	Baton Rouge Magnet High School
Holly Phan	Baton Rouge Magnet High School
Riley Quinlan	C.E. Byrd High School
Logan Schexnider	Beau Chene High School
Lauryn Smith	Varnado High School
Lauren Wiltz	Academy of the Sacred Heart Grand Coteau

Judge Jason Dagate made a motion to approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2023-2024 membership on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. Belinda Davis seconded that motion. There being no objection, the recommendations were approved.

**VII. PRESENTATIONS (CONT.)**

- D. LYAC update and first place Invent2Prevent award recognition  
*Witnesses Present: Holly Phan, Faith Courville, Daniel Price, and Isabella Lancaster*

Holly Phan, Faith Courville, and Daniel Price introduced themselves as members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC).

Holly Phan spoke about the first-place award that LYAC received in the Invent to Prevent national competition. She explained the card game called "Let's Talk" that they created to help students talk about things in a small group game setting.

Judge Manning commended LYAC on their success.

Daniel Price and Faith Courville talked about their experiences being part of LYAC.

Holly Phan spoke about LYAC's school safety bill that they are attempting to pass through the legislature this year.

Barry Erwin and Holly Phan discussed how LYAC developed the card game. Belinda Davis and Holly Phan discussed possible avenues for getting the card game in the hands of more teachers.

Mattilyn Karst congratulated the students on their bill that they are working on with Senator Milligan. Her and Holly Phan then discussed why they chose 5<sup>th</sup> grade as the target audience for their card game.

- E. Upcoming training for Adult Civic Education Program presentations  
*Witnesses present: Peggy Cotogno, Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education*

Peggy Cotogno explained how the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education Judges and Lawyers in the Classroom program works.

- F. Report on May 1 Law Day presentations around the state  
*Witnesses present: Peggy Cotogno, Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education*

Peggy Cotogno explained Law Day presentations that have been given around the state. She further asked the committee to help spread the word about Judges and Lawyers in the Classroom program.

### **VIII. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

Judge Manning encouraged the members to look at the nation's report card, which assesses educational progress among students. He expressed concern about declining scores, especially in United States History, and stressed the need for putting Civics and United States History in a prominent place in our schools.

Kieth Leger stated that the Department of Education is planing on releasing a new set of standards that will hopefully help address some of the issues stated by Judge Manning.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Barry Erwin made a motion to adjourn. Judge Dagate seconded that motion. There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Judge C. Wendell Manning

Chairman

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Approval Date