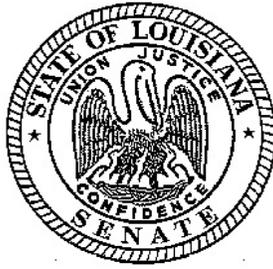


LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

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Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

APPROVED MINUTES

December 6, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, December 6, 2024, in the Hainkel Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairman, Judge C. Wendell Manning, called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman
Judge Jason Dagate
Barry Erwin
Belinda Cambre
Dr. Keith Leger
Jeffrey Wale
Kathleen Espinoza
Kathryn Stark
(proxy for Clarence "CC" Copeland)
Kevin Berken
Mike Hasten
Peggy Cotogno
Polly Johnson
Renee Roberts Gassen
Representative Raymond Crews
Representative Chuck Owen
Steve Procopio
Vickii Melius

MEMBERS ABSENT

Eurica Gaston
Fredell Butler
Jill Roshto
Joel Watson
Judd Jeansonne
Judge Randy Bethancourt
Scott Sternberg
Senator Rick Edmonds
Senator Beth Mizell

STAFF PRESENT

Ann S. Brown, Senior Analyst
Jeanell Waldrep, Secretary

III. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Judge Manning welcomed everyone. All commission members present introduced themselves and what position they serve on the commission.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the minutes from May 17, 2024. Kevin Berken motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Renee Roberts Gassen. There being no public comment or no objection, the minutes were approved.

V. APPROVAL OF 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

R.S. 24:973(A) (7) mandates that the commission report to the Governor and the legislature the activities of the commission and organizations that compose the commission. An email was previously sent to commission members containing a draft of the 2023-2024 Annual Report, and a hard-copy of the draft was provided to present commission members. Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Report. Mike Hasten motioned to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Report, seconded by Barry Erwin. There being no public comment or no objection, the 2023-2024 Annual Report was approved.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Committee to address revisions of Legislative Youth Advisory Committee application process (approval of recommendations)

Chairman, Hon. Charles "Chuck" Owen, House Representative District 30

Representative Owen reviewed the eight essay questions, and edited down the list to six essay questions which LYAC applicants would answer as apart of their application to the committee.

The original eight essay questions were:

1. Why do you want to serve as a member of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, and, if selected, how will your experience on the youth council affect your goals and life choices on civic involvement?
2. What do you think is the most important issue facing Louisiana youth today? How would you hope to impact this issue using your experience as a LYAC member?

3. To date, what has been your greatest achievement or accomplishment, whether civically, creatively, or academically?
4. If you could meet any Louisiana public figure (past or present), who would he or she be and why?
5. Every effort is made to ensure the council members represent the diverse population of Louisiana. Please describe what viewpoint you can bring to LYAC, what makes it unique, and why it is important that these viewpoints are represented. (For the purposes of this question, "diverse" means a council that offers a strength of multicultural backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, or physical abilities/qualities.)
6. Please describe what you believe to be the fundamental qualities of a good leader.
7. List any skill or talent you have that may contribute to the work of the youth council.
8. List your membership in any school/community clubs, organizations, and activities, including any offices or leadership positions held.

Representative Owen recommended the following changes:

1. Why do you want to serve as a member of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council?
2. What do you think is the most important issue facing Louisiana youth today? How would you hope to impact this issue using your experience as a LYAC member?
3. To date, what have been your greatest achievements and/or accomplishments?
4. What do you believe makes the U.S.A. an exceptional nation?
5. What do you believe is the greatest threat to our country?
6. List your membership in any school/community clubs, organizations, and activities, including any offices or leadership positions held.

Kathleen Espinoza suggests that in addition to the essay questions on the application, that applicants also complete a "Louisiana Civic's Quiz", with the idea that the applicants would be asked to do investigation into basic Louisiana civics questions. Representative Owen likes the idea of a quiz for applicants.

Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the changes to the LYAC application.

Kevin Berken motioned to approve the changes to the LYAC application, seconded by Polly Johnson. There being no public comment or no objection, the changes to the LYAC application were approved.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

A. Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) overview of recruitment and administration and recent recognition

Lt. Col. Nicholas M. James, LTC, AR

Commander

U.S. Army Baton Rouge "Rattler" Recruiting Battalion

Lt. Col. Nicholas M. James, representing the U.S. Army Baton Rouge Recruiting Battalion, the area they serve is the entire state of Louisiana, the entire state of Mississippi, a portion of western Tennessee, a portion of Arkansas, and a portion of Kentucky. Their mission is to recruit the best and brightest volunteers for the Army. Lt. Col. James explains how he and his team prepare citizens to be turned into soldiers. They work within schools, with their primary demographic being 17-24 year olds.

Judge Manning thanks Lt. Col. James for his presentation, and thanks him for his service.

Representative Owen asks Lt. Col. James about the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test, to which Lt. Col. James clarifies that there are multiple purposes for to test. Lt. Col. James states that there is also the U. S. Army Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC) in Fort Jackson, SC, available to applicants to assist them with overcoming academic and fitness barriers to service.

Dr. Keith Leger states that a bill (R.S. 2024 House Bill 762, now Act 635) was just signed by the governor changing the graduation requirements for high school students. In the past, the ACT was required for all students; with the newly passed bill, students who are on a career-diploma track have an option of either the ACT, the WorkKeys or the ASVAB test.

B. Rights, Laws, and Freedom - Celebrating Constitution Week at The Children's Museum

Melissa Saye, Executive Director
Dawn Landry, Development Director
NELA Children's Museum

Melissa Saye and Dawn Landry, from the Northeastern Louisiana Children's Museum, present information regarding a new partnership opportunity. The NELA Children's Museum main demographic is children ages 4 - 10 years, and their goal is to expand their knowledge and spark an interest in civic education.

On Constitution Day, September 17, 2024, the Museum hosted a Constitution Day Celebration, where Judge Manning attended and provided information about the voting process. 100 children were invited to the Museum, to participate in activities like voting and discussing why we need rules/laws that everyone should follow. A real voting machine was used, and a voting booth was made out of a refrigerator box. Children were asked to vote on the following: what exhibit at the Children's Museum is your favorite, what is your favorite STEM activity, and the most important question was what is your favorite cookie.

There are nine children's museums in Louisiana, and Ms. Saye states that they are all interested in including a civic education component in their facilities.

Mr. Jeffery Wale commended Ms. Saye on her work with the museum, and asks what the election results were for the favorite cookie. Ms. Saye states that chocolate chip was the favorite cookie.

C. Instructional resources available to Social Studies teachers

Sharon Necaïse
Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Academic Content
Louisiana Department of Education

Sharon Necaïse presented an update from the Department of Education regarding the Social Studies Instructional Materials that are available to teachers in Louisiana. One of the goals of the Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies (LSSSS) is to create a chronological coherence for students.

In kindergarten, students study: "life in my home, school, and local community".

1st grade: "life in the great state of Louisiana".

2nd grade: "life in our great country: The United States of America".

3rd grade: "the American story: people, places, and papers".

4th grade: "the ancient world".

5th grade: "the medieval period to early modern world".

6th grade: "the United States and Louisiana: beginnings through ratification".

7th grade: "the United States and Louisiana: early republic through reconstruction".

8th grade: "the United States and Louisiana: industrial age through modern era".

In high school: "civics" and "United States history".

Ms. Necaise shares that the Department of Education released updated Social Studies Course Frameworks for grades 3 through 8, high school civics and high school U.S. history. A partnership was formed with the Core Knowledge Foundation to create Bayou Bridges, a K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum for whole-class instruction. Bayou Bridges was released in Fall of 2023 for grades 4 and 5, and in Winter 2023-2024 it was released for grades 6, 7, and 8. In the Summer of 2024, Bayou Bridges released grades K, 1 and 2.

Ms. Necaise explains that the curriculum is structured to have a unit with a big idea, which is broken down into chapters. Each chapter has a framing question, with several core lessons and additional activities. There are key sources, whether they are texts or artifacts, as well as an assessment in each chapter. At the end of each unit, there is a unit performance test.

In Spring 2025, the Department is releasing a civics program called Foundations of Freedom, aligned to the new standards of the 2022 LSSSS. A new program called Land of Liberty will also be created for U.S. History.

Ms. Necaise states that curriculum publishers are welcome to submit their products to the Department for consideration for use in classrooms, and shared the timeline for instructional materials review.

D. Materials from Legislative Communications Office to assist in classroom presentations

Mike Hasten

Senior Communications Specialist

Louisiana Legislative Communications Office

Mike Hasten presents two coloring/activity books for children, that legislators can use to provide to constituents. The Louisiana State Legislature Coloring & Activity Book not only has Louisiana-theme scenes for children to color, but also contains information regarding facts of Louisiana. Children can color strawberries, learning that the strawberry is the state fruit. Children can color a brown pelican, and learn that the

brown pelican is the state bird and that our state is know as "the pelican state". There are even Louisiana-themed mazes and a connect the dot activity page. For older children, an Information and Activity Book provides more in-depth knowledge about the state, its history, the role of a legislator, state songs, and more complex word puzzles like decoding activities, word scrambles, and word searches. This Activity Book also explains the legislative process, explaining what a person can expect when they attend a legislative committee meeting. To date, 12,300 coloring and activity books have been distributed to students and 10,300 information and activity books have been distributed.

VIII. UPDATES

A. Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Megan Bella and Council Members

Megan Bella thanks Representative Owen for his work in amending the language of the essay questions for the Legislative Youth Advisory Council application. Ms. Bella invites three members of LYAC to provide an update on the council's activities.

Lucille Kincade, junior at Central Catholic High School in St. Mary Parish, is the elected president of LYAC for the 2024-2025 year. Ms. Kincade states that an exit survey was utilized to out-going members of the council, and that a flood of positive feedback was received, especially in explaining the legislative process. A second seminar at the end of the year was also requested by LYAC members, as one seminar is held at the beginning of their year, so they can meet each other and meet legislators.

Ms. Kincade presented the bill idea the LYAC members have discussed, and the members agreed that school safety should be top priority; the council will continue their discussions.

Owen Este, a sophomore at Fountainbleau High School in St. Tammany Parish. Mr. Este explained that at their seminar, several individuals came and spoke to the Council members. Speakers included: Judge Manning, Governor Landry, Senator Miguez, Representative Knox and Representative Freiberg. Concluding their day of speakers with a tour of the Capitol building.

The next day, the council had their first meeting in House Meeting Room 1, where the council members appreciated getting to sit behind the dais. The Invent 2 Prevent team presented what last year's project was. Mary Kate Andrepont, Deputy Director of Human Trafficking in the Governor's Office, presented information regarding the prevalent problem of human trafficking in Louisiana. Tamiko Stroud, Fiscal Analyst at the Louisiana

Legislative Fiscal Office, explained how a fiscal note is generated for bills in the legislature. Representative Beaulieu concluded their business meeting.

Spencer Croft, a junior at Lafayette High School in Lafayette Parish, stated that the Council has five in-person meetings every year, summer seminar and several Zoom meetings in-between their in-person meetings. Each meeting has two speakers, and previously Paul Toups, a State Trooper with Louisiana State Police, spoke to the Council about school safety, as students spend the majority of their time in school. This is what spark the Council's idea about drafting a bill regarding school safety.

Ms. Kincade concluded the Council update by thanking the Commission for their work, and how one day a member of LYAC may be a legislator who makes legislation! Judge Manning thanked the students for their updates and for their enthusiasm and optimism for the state.

Dr. Keith Leger asks the LYCA members their thoughts on the two new questions to the LYAC application: "what do you believe makes the U.S.A. an exceptional nation" and "what do you believe is the greatest threat to our country". Ms. Kincade stated what makes America great is that we can represent ourselves, it's the people who are represented and make the decisions. The love of country is what drives legislators to put the work in and help LYAC members.

B. Recent Activities of the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education

- a. Justice Catherine D. Kimball Summer Institute
- b. Constitution Day / Week Presentations
- c. Adult Civic Education (ACE)

Peggy Cotogno, Executive Director of Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education

Peggy Cotogno explained that the Justice Catherine D. Kimball Summer Institute will be able to pay for the teachers to attend the program, including providing textbooks to the teachers.

Ms. Cotogno states that since the last meeting in May, Lawyers in the Classroom and Judges in the Classroom have impacted over 6,100 students. 3,900 of those students were in programs that were organized by her office, the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education. The other 2,200 students were through programs that were organized by lawyers and judges; where lawyers and judges go directly to schools with their own program.

A program was held at an assisted living center for seniors, as apart of the Adult Civic Education program. Ms. Cotogno asks that if anyone knows of a group of adults who would like a class, or if a group of judges or lawyers want CLE, she can assist.

C. LCCE Civic Education Event Calendar

Peggy Cotgono, Calendar Coordinator, showed Commission members where the LCCE Civic Education Event Calendar is located online, and how to navigate the previous stories located on the "pinboard". The calendar can be found by going to the LCCE website (https://house.louisiana.gov/civiced/default_Calendar).

VII. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

C. Final words

Judge Manning thanked the sergeant at arms and staff for their work in preparing for the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn, and the motion was seconded. There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman

Approval Date