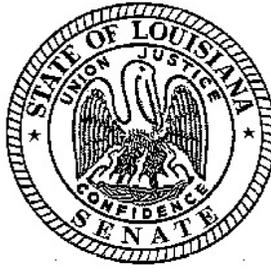


LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

Address:

Post Office Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-6090



Committee Staff

Ann S. Brown
Senior Analyst

Caroline Tyler
Secretary

Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

APPROVED MINUTES

May 16, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 16, 2025, in the Hainkel Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairman, Judge C. Wendell Manning, called the meeting to order at 1:03 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
Kevin Berken
Belinda Cambre
Kathryn Stark, *proxy for Clarence "CC" Copeland*
Peggy Cotogno
Barry Erwin
Renee Roberts Gassen
Mike Hasten
Dr. Keith Leger
Representative Mike Bayham, *proxy for Senator Beth Mizell*
Representative Chuck Owen
Alex Tirado, *proxy for Steven Procopio*
Les Theriot

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Raymond Crews
Senator Rick Edmonds
Kathleen Espinoza
Eurica Gaston
Judd Jeansonne
Polly Johnson
Vickii Melius
Scott Sternberg
Joel Watson

STAFF PRESENT

Ann S. Brown, Senior Analyst
Caroline Tyler, 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 December 6, 2024. Judge Jason Dagate motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Chuck Owen. There being no public comment or no objection, the minutes were approved.

V. BUSINESS

A. Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC)

1. Approve recommendations of the Application Review Committee for new 2025-2026 membership for LYAC

Megan Bella, Coordinator of LYAC, Louisiana Senate, thanked the LCCE members who helped grade the 210 applicants for the 2025-2026 class of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. Ms. Bella states that the personal information of each applicant is redacted on the applications, so that the individual who are scoring do not know who they are scoring, nor do they know who the other individuals who are scoring the applicants, thus creating a "double blind" effect for the scoring process. Each applicant is scored a number for their short answer question, as well as their letter of recommendation letters. The top scores for each six districts are chosen, and then the remaining top 13 scores are selected for at-large members. The 31 students that earned a position in the 2025-2026 LYAC class are:

Victoria Baez	Christian Knight	Jyllian Beran
Momin Mahmood	Melissa Le	Tre Bishop
John Parker	Kelby Brown	Andrew Chevallier
Lourdes Maristany	Hunter Grace Layrisson	Purba Das
Brianna Peng	Brandon Rowton	Everett Etie
Amelia Stein	Sophia Montalbano	Gigi Frankowski
Duc Bui	Amelia Thompson	Tristan Hampton
Radia Karim	Coco Williamson	Beija Lopes-Morgan
William Vyas	Addison Aucoin	Cullen Murillo
Emily Adams	Brinkley Bennett	Cianna Newton
		Lincoln Trumps

Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for new 2025-2026 membership for LYAC. Representative Owen motioned to approve the motion, seconded by Mike Hasten. There being no public comment or no objection, the motion was approved. Judge Manning congratulated the new LYAC members.

2. Approve LYAC 2025-2026 budget

Megan Bella, Coordinator of LYAC, Louisiana Senate, stated that the budget ask for 2025-2026 is exactly the same as last year's budget.

Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the recommendations of the LYAC 2025-2026 budget. Dr. Keith Leger motioned to approve the motion, seconded by Judge Dagate. There being no public comment or no objection, the motion was approved.

3. Approve LYAC mileage reimbursement rules/guidelines

Megan Bella, Coordinator of LYAC, Louisiana Senate, stated that the only change is that the IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate increased to \$0.70 per mile, previously it was \$0.67 per mile.

Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the recommendations of the LYAC mileage reimbursement rules/guidelines. Renee Roberts Gassen motioned to approve the motion, seconded by Dr. Keith Leger. There being no public comment or no objection, the motion was approved.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. The Bicentennial of the 1825 Louisiana Civic Code

*Hon. Jay B McCallum, Associate Justice, Louisiana Supreme Court
Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society Steering Committee on the
Commemoration*

Before starting his presentation, Judge McCallum noted to Judge Manning, that Dr. Leger had his hand raised, and would like to speak. Dr. Leger stated that he was one of the individuals who scored the LYAC applications, and that he researched question 4 on the application, asking an AI platform to summarize the answers provided to question 4. Question 4 states "what do you believe makes the U.S.A. an exceptional nation?"

Dr. Leger stated that the summary said:

"Applicants to the Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council believe that the United States is an exceptional nation primarily due to its freedoms: speech, religion, press and voting; enshrined in the constitution and enabling self expression and democratic participation. [LYAC applicants] also highlight opportunity, describing the United States as a land where hard-work allows anyone to succeed, regardless of background. Diversity: cultural, ethnic and ideological, is celebrated as a strength, fostering innovation and unity. The democratic system, with citizen input and checks and balances, empowers individuals, while resilience and

adaptability through legal and social progress, ensure growth. Additional factors include a strong education system, military and economic power, and a melting pot culture, with the United States ability to overcome challenges and maintain a fluid, inclusive society setting it apart from other nations. These views expressed by Louisiana youth reflect a blend of patriotism, personal experience and civic optimism."

Judge Manning thanked Dr. Leger for his comments, and apologized for not seeing his hand raised earlier.

Judge McCallum shared a presentation, which a copy of is included on file, titled "Louis Casimir Elisabeth Moreau-Lislet & The Birth of the Civil Code". Judge McCallum stated that our state civic code is 200 years old, and something that he is passionate about. Judge McCallum states that the presentation he shares today is an abbreviated version of a presentation he shared in Monroe, sharing a biographical sketch on Lislet's essential contribution to the creation of the 1825 Civil Code of Louisiana.

Judge McCallum states that as a state we currently stand in a crossroads, between using a Civil Law system and having "49 sisters [meaning states] around us" who use a Common Law system. Judge McCallum shared biographical information about Louis Casimir Elisabeth Moreau-Lislet. Moreau-Lislet was trilingual, speaking English, Spanish and French, and served as a translator for the Orleans Territorial Legislature. In 1806, he published an Explication des Lois Criminelles du Territoire d 'Orleans. He was later commissioned by the Legislature to compile a civil code, which later became the Digest of the Civil Laws, or The Digest of 1808. Moreau-Lislet, along with Edward Livingston and Pierre Derbigny, revised The Digest of 1808 to create the Civil Code of 1825.

Judge McCallum stated that Moreau-Lislet helped establish the Supreme Court of Territory of Orleans in 1804, and due to its historical precedent, the court has been located in New Orleans, instead of the capital Baton Rouge. The Louisiana Supreme Court is the one branch of the Louisiana government that is outside of the capital city.

Judge McCallum brought each member of the Commission a bookmark that promotes forgiveness. A copy of the bookmark is included on file.

Judge Manning thanked Judge McCallum for sharing his presentation.

Representative Owen thanked Judge McCallum for his presentation.

B. Resources to Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of the United States

*Hon. Michael Robert "Mike" Bayham, Jr., District 103, La House of Representatives
Chairman, Louisiana America 250 Commission*

Representative Bayham, Chairman of the Louisiana America 250 Commission and Representative of Louisiana District 103, shared information about the America 250 Commission, showing the Commission the Louisiana America 250 website, which can be found at america250la.org. Representative Bayham brought each member of the Commission an Louisiana America 250 lapel pin, which features 18 stars, because Louisiana was the 18th state admitted to the union. Representative Bayham also brought Louisiana America 250 flyers to the Commission members.

C. LYAC Update

Members of LYAC and Megan Bella

Megan Bella introduces students who each share what they learned during their experience with LYAC during the previous year. LYAC members who spoke are: Akenya Travis, Owen Este, David Huang, Easton Smith, Jyllian Beran, Brinkley Bennett, and Lucille Kincade.

Representative Bayham appreciates Ms. Travis' comments on Representative Knox, and how he utilizes social media to stay in touch with his constituents. Representative Owen appreciates the student's thoughts on the Freedom Framework.

Judge Manning thanked the LYAC members for sharing their update, and asked the LYAC members to come at the end of the meeting for a group picture.

D. Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (LCLCE) Update

Peggy Cotogno, Executive Director, LCLCE

1. Law Day/Law Week Presentations
2. Judge Benjamin Jones, Judges in the Classroom Award
3. Summer Institute
4. Civics in Action Award
5. President's Award of Excellence for Outstanding Civics Teacher

Peggy Cotogno, Executive Director of the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education, stated that Law Day was May 1. Ms. Cotogno stated that the Judge Benjamin Jones Judges in the Classroom Award will be presented to Judge Bruce Hampton, from Farmerville, who attended Louisiana Tech, Tulane Law and SMU Law. Ms. Cotogno stated that free teacher training, Summer Institute, will take place in July. She has concerns for how this program will continue with the future dissolution of the Federal Department of Education. Ms. Cotogno stated that the Civics in Action Award and the President's Award of Excellence for Outstanding

Civics Teacher have not been awarded yet. Constitution Day will be September 17, 2025.

E. LCCE Civic Education Event Calendar

Peggy Cotogno, Calendar Coordinator

Peggy Cotogno, 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).

F. Report on the status of recommendations of Committee on LCCE Membership and Quorum

Barry Erwin, President and CEO of CABL

Barry Erwin, President and CEO of CABL, stated that there was trouble in the past with obtaining a quorum for the Commission, and how there were several organizations that no longer fit the desire of the Commission, so several organizations were identified that could be removed from the membership. Mr. Erwin stated that Session 2025 is a fiscal session, and legislators were limited in the number of bills they could file that were not related to fiscal matters. Since the 2026 Session will be a general session, Mr. Erwin believes we will not have trouble finding a legislator to carry a bill to assist with changing the membership list and quorum number for the Commission.

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

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 2:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman

Approval Date