

LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

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Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

APPROVED MINUTES

May 17, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 17, 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 2:06 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman
Judge Randy Bethancourt
Barry Erwin
Dr. Keith Leger
Eurica Gaston
Jeffrey Wale
Judd Jeansonne
Kathleen Espinoza
Kevin Berken
Mike Hasten
Peggy Cotogno
Renee Roberts
Scott Sternberg
Steve Procopio

MEMBERS ABSENT

Belinda Cambre
Clarence "CC" Copeland
Fredell Butler
Jill Roshto
Joel Watson
Polly Johnson
Representative Chuck Owen
Representative Raymond Crews
Senator Beth Mizell
Senator Rick Edmonds
Vickii Melius

STAFF PRESENT

Ann S. Brown, Senior Analyst
Caroline Tyler, Secretary

III. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Judge Manning welcomed everyone. All commission members present introduced themselves.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Judge Manning then entertained a motion to approve the minutes from October 27, 2023. Barry Erwin motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Renee Roberts. There being no objection, the minutes were approved.

V. BUSINESS

A. Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC)

1. Approve recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2024-2025 membership for LYAC

Megan Bella, Coordinator of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, explained what the Council does and how members are selected. She then read aloud the 31 chosen applicants for the Council. Kevin Berken moved to approve the list of 31 applicants, seconded by Scott Sternberg. There being no opposition, the 31 applicants for the 2024-2025 membership of LYAC was approved.

The 31 members of the 2024-2025 LYAC are:

Congressional District 1

Owen Este'
Beija Lopes-Morgan
Catalina Reichard

Congressional District 2

Charles Andrews
Jerminy Kendrick
Sarai Gaines

Congressional District 3

Susanna Chiruguru
Scarlett Osborn
Walker Prejean

Congressional District 4

James Giddens
Jett Robinson
Tyler Wood

Congressional District 5

Emily Nevils
Akeyna Travis
Jyllian Beran

Congressional District 6

Brinkley Bennett
David Huang
Miniya Malone

At-Large Members

Bailey Burdette
Arun Cacodcar
Spencer Croft
Phoebe Fannin
Lucy Kincade
Joe Lewis
Paxton Mounts
Elsie Poynter
Benjamin Ray
Easton Smith
Loralie Smith
Neal Tandon
Emma Vinson

2. Approve LYAC mileage reimbursement rules/guidelines and/or committee to establish mileage reimbursement rules/guidelines

Scott Sternberg explained the proposed 2024-2025 Budget for LYAC. The mileage reimbursement would be for students traveling more than 30 miles to Baton Rouge, and would be \$ 0.67 per mile.

Scott Sternberg moved to approve the mileage reimbursement rule, seconded by Judd Jeansonne. There being no opposition, the mileage reimbursement rules was approved.

Scott Sternberg displayed and explained the mileage reimbursement form that Megan Bella created that the students would use to submit their mileage for reimbursement, and explained that the students are given a deadline as to how late they could deposit their checks.

Scott Sternberg moved to approve the mileage reimbursement form and the guidelines, seconded by Barry Erwin. There being no opposition, the mileage reimbursement form and guidelines was approved.

3. Approve LYAC 2024-2025 Budget

Scott Sternberg explained the proposed 2024-2025 Budget for LYAC.

Kevin Berken asked about the discrepancy between the proposed budget amount of \$9,000 versus the potential exact cost listed in the cost category description of \$11,344.

Megan Bella explained that this figure, of \$11,344, was estimated based on the locations of the 2023-2024 LYAC members, as the 2024-2025 LYAC members had not been selected yet and therefore they could not estimate the cost of the travel mileage for the 2024-2025 LYAC members. Megan also anticipates that some students may car pool, and some students may not be able to attend every meeting. Megan stated that the total amount LYAC will be receiving will not exceed \$15,000. Megan also confirmed that the \$0.67 per mile reimbursement the LYAC students would be receiving is the amount that Senators and Representatives currently receive for mileage reimbursement.

Scott Sternberg moved to approve the proposed 2024-2025 LYAC Budget, seconded by Kathleen Espinoza. There being no opposition, the mileage reimbursement rules was approved. Scott Sternberg moved to approve the proposed 2024-2025 LYAC Budget, seconded by Kathleen Espinoza. There being no opposition, the mileage reimbursement rules was approved.

4. Approve recommendations of Committee on LCCE Membership and Quorum

Barry Erwin was chair of this Committee to study the makeup of the Commission and make recommendations on future Commission positions. The Committee consisted of Barry Erwin, Peggy Cotogno and Clarence "CC" Copeland.

The Committee's list of recommendations are:

1. Consolidate the appointments for the House and Senate Legislators Back to School Program Coordinators into the single position of Coordinator of the Legislators back to School Program to reflect the change in structure that has been implemented by the legislative leadership (positions 11 & 12).
2. Remove the appointment from the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations as it no longer exists. Its successor organization's work is no longer aligned to the commission's work and they have asked to be removed (position 20).
3. Remove the appointment from the Volunteer Louisiana Commission since that group is no longer active (position 22).
4. Remove the additional member that the Commission is allowed to appoint as that position is currently vacant (position 23).
5. Clarify the language regarding designees to serve on the Commission to make it clear that the head of each office, agency, or organization participating on the Commission may choose a designee to serve as a voting member for any meeting regardless of their term on the Commission.
6. Define the number of members who must be present to reach a quorum as 10 members present.
7. Request that Commission staff send a letter or communication to each office, agency, or organization represented on the Commission informing them of the role and purpose of the Commission and reminding them of their appointment or ability to designate a representative to serve on the Commission.

8. Request that Commission staff prepare these recommendations, with proper language, in the form of a bill that can be filed for the next legislative session.

Barry Erwin moved to approve the recommendations from the Committee on Membership and Quorum, seconded by Steven Procopio. There being no opposition, the recommendations from the Committee on Membership and Quorum was approved.

Judd Jeansonne requested that Recommendation 3 be removed as the Volunteer Louisiana Commission is still active in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and he is present and serving in this position. Judd Jeansonne moved to amend item number 3 on the list of recommendations, seconded by Steven Procopio. There being no opposition, the amendment to remove item number 3 was approved.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. Louisiana Constitutional Convention

Dr. Steven Procopio, President of PAR and Delegate to the Convention, shared information about the possible Louisiana Constitutional Convention and provided Commission Members with a handout of information.

B. Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom

Hon. Randall Bethancourt, Chief Judge, 32nd Judicial District Court, Louisiana and Robert Gunn, Deputy Judicial Administrator, Louisiana Supreme Court, spoke about the Judges in the Classroom, Students in the Courtroom program and how judges from all over Louisiana participate.

Robert Gunn provided Commission Members with a folder of information about the program, including flyers they make available to teachers and judges for them to participate. 167 currently serving and retired judges participate in the program, with 62 courts representing all levels of the judiciary system, and over 31,700 students have participated in the program since its relaunch in 2021.

C. Civic Educational Resources in the Louisiana Attorney General's Office

Renée Roberts Gassen, Director of Outreach, Office of the Louisiana Attorney General, gave a presentation about resources available through the Attorney General's Office. These training programs are provided to governmental entities, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers and the community.

Resources for Governmental Entities include: Civil Law Trainings, Louisiana Justice Court, Law Enforcement, Sexual Predator Apprehension, Cyber Crime,

Internet Crimes Against Children, Response to Domestic Violence and Orders of Protection, Human Trafficking, and Insurance Fraud.

Resources for Healthcare Providers include Medicaid Fraud.

Resources for the community include: Fraud and Abuse, Consumer Safety, Youth Anti-Vaping and Tobacco Use, Internet Crimes Against Children, Domestic Violence in the Workplace and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

D. LYAC Update

Emma Bonney, graduating senior at St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, and current LYAC member, shared about her experience on the council

She discussed Invent 2 Prevent, a nationwide program that empowers high school students to prevent targeted violence and terrorism through the development and deployment of innovative initiatives that produce measurable results. The Council created a children's book that is "meant to expose kindergarten students to new cultures. Each character introduces their unique cultural holiday (Vietnamese New Year, Diwali, Guatemalan Easter) by explaining holiday traditions and the ways they celebrate." Commission members were each given a copy of this book, titled Thao, Pradeep, & Carolina. More information about Invent 2 Prevent can be found on their website (<https://www.edventurepartners.com/invent2prevent>).

Emma also discussed the Council's involvement in House Bill 577 (2024 Regular Session, author Representative Carver) to help ban targeted advertising on minors. Emma shared that she testified in the House Commerce Committee meeting. More information about this House Bill can be found on this website (<https://legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=24RS&b=HB577&sbi=y>)

Kathleen Espionza suggested we create an exit interview for LYAC members to see what LYAC members have learned and how the Council could be improved in the future.

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

Peggy Cotogno, Executive Director, LCLCE, gave a brief overview of the agency. Peggy stated that since the Judges in the Classroom program was relaunched that she has invited over 100 judges to make a presentation at LCLCE.

Peggy shared that "We the People" is a nationally acclaimed social studies curriculum that allows students to conduct simulated congressional hearings, where they present oral arguments and have additional discussions. This is a federally funded program to pay for the training of the teachers.

Peggy shared that the Summer Institute will be held in the June at the Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. Courthouse. The Justice Catherine D. Kimball Summer Institute is a professional development opportunity for teachers.

Peggy stated that the Judge Benjamin Jones, Judges in the Classroom Award, will be presented at the Louisiana State Bar Association's Annual Meeting.

Peggy stated the Civics in Action Award is awarded to a student who has given back to their community (school or home community). This award is given at the Summer Institute.

Peggy stated that the President's Award of Excellence for Outstanding Civics Teacher is a joint award with the Louisiana State Bar Association, and it honors a teacher who has done an outstanding job at being a civics teacher. This award is also given at the Summer Institute. The recipient receives a plaque as well as a stipend of \$250 to purchase law materials for their classroom.

F. 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 recognized Representative Barbara Freiberg, sitting in the audience, for attending the meeting. Representative Freiberg is a former member of the Commission and thanked her for attending. Judge Manning thanked staff for their work in preparing for the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Kevin Berken made a motion to adjourn. Judge Manning seconded that motion. There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge C. Wendell Manning, Chairman

Approval Date