

# LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

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## Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

### APPROVED MINUTES

May 21, 2021

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 21, 2021 in House Committee Room 5 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  
Shan Davis, Vice Chairperson  
Mary Bean  
Claston Bernard  
Fredell Butler  
Rep. Gary Carter  
Peggy Cotogno  
Barry Erwin  
Ryan Gremillion  
Michael Ince  
Judd Jeansonne  
Terry Landry  
Rep. Barbara Reich Freiberg  
Jill Roshto  
Lauren Russell Ladner  
Kenny Shutt

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Jamie Staub  
Joel Watson, Jr.  
Chief Justice John L. Weimer  
Jackson Wright

MEMBERS ABSENT

Beth Courtney  
Polly Johnson  
Sen. Beth Mizell  
Lawrence J. Narcisse  
Shelbie Newman  
Robert Travis Scott

STAFF PRESENT

Megan Bella, Senate Staff and LYAC Coordinator  
Tammy Crain-Waldrop, Legislative Researcher  
Candace Shields, Senior Secretary

Judge Manning: All right. We have a quorum. Ladies and gentlemen, we do have a number of new members, uh, who are visiting, uh, for the first time on our commission today so I think it would be good for everyone to reintroduce themselves and to state, uh, their representative capacity. We'll begin with Ms. Staub, seated to the lower level of the dais, uh.

Ms. Staub: Jamie Staub, retired educator, Project Citizen. And I'm not a new member, but, uh, thank you. Um, I'll explain Project Cit –, Project Citizen to anyone that wants to learn about it.

Judge Manning: Welcome. Next.

Mr. Jeansonne: Judd Jeansonne, executive director of Volunteer Louisiana in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Judge Manning: Thank you for joining us.

Ms. Roshto: Jill Roshto, executive director, Louisiana Association of Non-Profit Organizations.

Judge Manning: Next.

Mr. Shutt: Yes, Kenny Shutt. Uh, I'm the ad director for the Louisiana Press Association. I'm sitting in for, uh, McHugh David who will be taking this position over. Uh, was supposed to be here today, but couldn't make it so I'm sitting in for him today.

Judge Manning: We're glad to have you.

Mr. Watson: Uh, Joel Watson, Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin's Office.

Mr. Bernard: Claston Bernard on behalf of the Attorney General's Office. I'm an author. I'm an immigrant and, uh, you know, an athlete, a former athlete at LSU and it's a pleasure to be here. And I look forward to lending any insight that I can to this organization and to anyone who is interested.

Judge Manning: Glad to have you.

Mr. Ince: Mike Ince, director of Governmental Affairs, Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. Erwin: I'm Barry Erwin, president of the Council for a Better Louisiana.

Ms. Cotogno: Peggy Cotogno with the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education.

Ms. Ladner: Uh, Lauren Ladner. I work in the Legislative Communications Office and I do the Back to School Program.

Ms. Bean: Mary Bean. I also work in the Legislative Communications Office and I also do the Back to School Program.

Mr. Wright: Jackson Wright. I work in the Governor's Office on the Policy Legislative Team.

Judge Manning: Ms. Freiberg?

Rep. Freiberg: Barbara Freiberg, Representative for District 70.

Judge Manning: Glad to have you. Judge Bethancourt, do you want to say anything?

Judge Bethancourt: Well, I'm a judge at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court and the past president of Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education.

Judge Manning: Thank you. Ryan?

Mr. Gremillion: Ryan Gremillion, uh, Chief of Staff, Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs at the Department of Ed.

Judge Manning: Mr. Butler?

Mr. Butler: Fredell Butler, representative for the Louisiana Parent/Teacher Association.

Judge Manning: And Mr. Landry?

Mr. Landry: Terry Landry, Jr. on behalf of NAACP.

Judge Manning: Have I missed any members of the commission? Have I missed any members of the commission? We purposefully did skip one of our newest members of the commission, but he will be introduced in a few moments. Anyone else?

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Judge Manning: Then I'll proceed with requesting a motion to approve the minutes from our meeting of November 20, 2020. It was previously circulated to everyone. It's been posted online.

Mr. Butler: So moved.

Judge Manning: It's been properly moved –, and properly moved by Mr. Landry.

Mr. Gremillion: Second.

Judge Manning: Seconded by Mr. Gremillion. Any discussion? Mr. Butler, thank you, Mr. Butler. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Commission Members: Aye.

Judge Manning: Any opposed? Any abstention? Motion carries.

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the minutes of November 20, 2020. There being no objection, the minutes were approved.

### **IV. SPECIAL ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE JOHN L. WEIMER, CHIEF JUSTICE, LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT**

Judge Manning: At this time, it is my great honor and privilege to introduce the next person on our agenda. This gentleman has a true heart for education, for teaching, and particularly for civic and law related education. Prior to taking the bench, our guest speaker was a full-time faculty member at Nicholls State University where he taught law and ethics classes for sixteen years. He received the Presidential Award for Teaching Excellence and was also named a Who's Who Among America's Teachers. He practiced law in Thibodaux and was certified as a mediator. He began his judicial career serving as Judge Pro Tempore, Division D of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in 1993 following an appointment by the Louisiana Supreme Court. In 1995, he was elected to serve as judge for that district, Division A, and re-elected in 1996 without opposition. In 1998, he elected to serve on the Louisiana 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit Court of Appeal. In 2001, our speaker began his service on the state's high court, the Louisiana Supreme Court, when he was elected to serve as an associate justice, District 6, comprised of the parishes of Assumption, Iberia, LaFourche, Plaquemine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and a portion of the West Bank of Jefferson which includes Grand Isle. Did I exclude anyone?

Chief Justice Weimer: (Inaudible).

Judge Manning: Thank you. Thank you, Chief.

Chief Justice Weimer: (Inaudible). Well, thank you. Thank you.

Judge Manning: The Honorable Judge John L. Weimer, Chief Justice, became the twenty-eighth chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court January 1, 2021. Chief Justice Weimer has been honored with the Outstanding Judicial Award from Victims and Citizens Against Crime and with the Outstanding Jurist Award from Crime Fighters, Inc., both statewide organizations dedicated to victims of crime. Additionally, he has been honored by Common Sense Against Crime and Crime Fighters with Award of Merit. In 2006, our chief justice was named as one of the leading judges in America by the national publication *The Lawdragon*. He's also been recognized for his significant assistance in establishing the LaFourche Parish Drug Treatment Court. He's a former director on the Board of Directors of Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education. And frequently teaches throughout the district he serves re-establishing and coordinating a LaFourche Parish Student Government Day Program. Chief Justice Weimer was born and raised in LaFourche Parish, graduated from Thibodaux High School, was Academic Honors Hall of Fame graduate at Nicholls State University, twice elected as student body president of that distinguished university. He received his Juris Doctor from LSU. He is married to Mrs. Penny Hymel, former elementary school teacher, who was born and raised in the river parishes. They are the parents of three daughters: Jacquelyn, Katherine, and Emily. And the grandparents of two boys. My dear friends, please join me in welcoming the new chief justice, I can still refer to

him as new chief justice, of Louisiana's Supreme Court, The Honorable John L. Weimer. Chief Justice, we welcome you.

Chief Justice Weimer: (Inaudible) to educate citizens in the community as well as students in schools of the importance of citizen involvement in a representative democracy and to promote communications and collaboration among organizations in the state that can conduct civic education programs. I'm here to help with that mission. I commend the commission and the commission members for the service to that mission and its collective wisdom and discernment in choosing Judge Manning as its chair. I, ah, consider him a good friend. He is an honorable judge and a dedicated public servant who is committed to education. Very briefly as he indicated in a prior career immediately before becoming a judge, I taught, uh, for sixteen years at, uh, Harvard, Harvard on the bayou that is, of course, Nicholls State University in Thibodaux. And, uh, was a –, eventually became a full-time teacher and a part-time attorney and mediator. Upon becoming judge, I realized how judges and teachers have so much in common. Teachers and judges are public servants and must sit in judgment. Both professions provide assistance to people and impart knowledge. They must be in command of the classroom or the courtroom and they both have the opportunity to touch lives in a positive fashion. I have found many fond memories as a teacher and as a judge from interactions with young people who have taught me as much if not more than I've taught them. I recall having a conversation with an elderly Cajun lady from south LaFourche, as we say there, "down the bayou", and we were talking about the joys and benefits of teaching and how, as I've indicated, you have the ability to touch peoples lives in a positive fashion and reciprocally have them touch your life in a positive fashion. And I looked across the room and saw a young man who was a student of mine, and I said, "As a matter of fact, I taught that young man over there." And she said, "Cher, I'd never admit to that. You never know how them people gonna turn out." She said, "What if that boy becomes an ax murderer? What you gonna tell people?" I said, "Well, good point. What do you say?" She said, "All I ever say is that boy was in my class." Well, I've had, uh, so many wonderful students that have and continue to touch my life in a positive way. As a matter of fact, a group of my former students at Nicholl's wrote me a very nice letter congratulating me and thanking me for enhancing their resume because now they are going to put a line that they were taught by the chief justice of the state of Louisiana. School outreach is an area formerly initiated twenty years ago by The Honorable Judge Ben Jones of Monroe when he was at that time president of the District Judges Association. His program, Judges in the Classroom, has evolved through the work of many judges such as my colleagues Judge Scott Crayton of Shreveport; Judge Randy Bethancourt of Terrebonne Parish, who is here; Wendell Manning, who is here of course, and –, uh, with his program that is referred to as ACE. Uh, Scott and Randy have, uh, taught about forty thousand students together, about twenty thousand a piece, and made a wonderful impact on the community in that respect. We need only commitment and creativity to deliver programs like that through the communities in south Louisiana and that is what we hope to do. I suggest that

the more time spent in classrooms demystifying for inquisitive minds how cases are decided may well result in less time being spent in the courtroom which would be very beneficial to the judges and all of society. People often ask me if I'm busy. I say yes. And they say that's good, right? And I say no, not in my line of work. The world would be a better place if I had a lot less to do. Just as if undertakers and policeman and district attorneys have less to do. It has been rightly stated by Henry Adams, "A teacher affects eternity." Teachers can never tell where their influence stops. I have discovered that judges who teach are particularly influential and I guess it's because of the attire. The robe has some symbolism to people. I'm often told also that "you seem like a nice guy. I just hope and pray I never have to see you professionally." And I tell them that "I feel the same way about you". The first thing I did when I became a district judge all those twenty-six years ago was to purposely schedule an adoption. A joyous and happy occasion that created the most fundamental and basic element of society: a family. I also invited a group of students into the courtroom where I served and I had been visiting students either in the courtroom or the classroom ever since. I know it is good for me personally and professionally, and I pray that it is also good for the students that I've had the opportunity to teach. When we discuss such matters as personal responsibility, respect for the law, the consequences of inappropriate behavior, and how all are equal before the law regardless of their financial standing, social standing, or skin color before the law, I am the first to acknowledge that we can do better in the last category. We are attuned to doing so. As chief justice, my first act was to call on judges to teach in their community. My staff convinced me not to send that out at, uh, midnight, and, uh, because they did not want to wake anybody up. They might think it's a warrant or something coming in that they have to sign so I deferred to my staff and sent it about 7:30 in the morning when most people should be up. Uh, judges have responded favorably by creating a task force, and Judge Bethancourt is on that task force, highly recruited, I might add, by me. Judge Manning is on that task force, again highly recruited by me and others. And, uh, what we're working to do is get judges into the classrooms throughout our state. We've talked to legislators. Uh, we have partnered with the Louisiana Center of Law and Civic Education, Peggy. We have also partnered with the BESE Board. As it turns out, Thibodaux punches above its weight and the president of the BESE Board is now, uh, from Thibodaux, and she and I, uh, got to talking about what we can do. And I had visited her class when she was a principal God knows how many times. And, uh, we created a partnership with them and we're working together to enhance what we do. This task force is enthusiastic, competent, dedicated, and made up of judges who share a passion for teaching. And I thank each of the judges for their commitment for providing an education to our youth and other citizens while also improving the perception of the judiciary. It is not only important to the judiciary, but it's so important also to society to know that judges care about our community as well as performing the tasks of a judge. The task force, and this commission I'll suggest, have similar goals and missions. Your goal and mission is more specifically focused on civics, but I assure you we can work together by sending judges and hopefully legislators also and attorneys into the community. I am here to pitch a

partnership and a positive perception of the judiciary and this commission. As a teacher, I cannot help but impart a civics lesson, if I may, with a quick story. I was recently invited to speak, uh, at a function and the individual who introduced me who was a community leader as well as a very well-rounded indi-, individual, very astute individual, confessed his ignorance before the organization as he introduced me that he did not know whether I was elected or appointed to be chief justice. Now, I'm not going to ask you by a show of hands how many of ya'll know that. I can give you the answer momentarily. And I told him and the audience, "None of the above." I told the audience that I obviously did not get the position based on my looks. And, uh, rather I was appointed to the Supreme Court twenty-one years ago and re-elected without opposition one year later and re-elected once again ten years later. And, of course, I would like to think that I was not opposed those two times, uh, because people respected the work that I was doing and no one else, uh, wanted to run for the position, but the cynic in me tells me that nobody else wanted this damn job. I only say that in jest of course. Uh, since -, uh, I did tell them that since I was elected twenty-one years ago, I have continued to draw a breath, uh, have a pulse, and generate some semblance of brain waves and that's how I became chief because it is the person who has served on the court the longest, not the oldest. There's some more senior than me in that respect, but I have been on the court the longest. As an aside, and, uh, I just want to point out something I did many years ago and anyone interested in it we can talk further, I started a program in LaFourche Parish called Student Government Day and it is, in effect, a live civics lesson. Students from the four high schools in LaFourche Parish ceremoniously assume the positions of all of the parish officials and those of the City of Thibodaux and, uh, follow them. Shadow them and learn about what it is like to govern. This program has been now in effect for thirty-four years and serves about forty-four students annually and these students generally run for the positions. They hold in-school elections. And the program -, uh, one of the -, one of the great things about the program is it improves the aesthetics of the parish for at least one day, but, uh, it also provides public officials with a valuable learning opportunity. They learn generally as much as they teach. I only mention this again because I have available a templet to put on this program if anyone is interested. There's a, uh, limerick that, uh, all public speakers should commit to memory and, uh, it's by Ogden Nash and it goes like this, "Speaker, oh, speaker, you live under a delusion. The words the audience longs to hear are 'in conclusion.'" So, in conclusion, the words you long to hear, let's work together to educate our young people and citizens about civics and about those matters that they need to know to become productive citizens in our democracy. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you so much for your attention.

Judge Manning: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Chief Justice, for your service and your leadership, particularly your leadership with initiative of your task force with the Judges in the Classroom/Students in the Courtroom. Look forward to working with you and continuing yielding and moving forward in that regard.



Chief Justice Weimer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judge Manning: And for being with us today.

Chief Justice Weimer: Thank you so very much.

Judge Manning: You welcome.

**WITNESSES PRESENT:**

**Information Only:**

Judge Randall L. Bethancourt, 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC, Houma, LA

**V. BUSINESS**

**A. Approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2021-2022 membership on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

Judge Manning: Continuing with our agenda, at this time I'll invite forward Megan Bella, the Louisiana Senate LYAC coordinator as well as –, uh, I think we have some representatives from the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. Will they please come forward? Would the Sergeant-at-Arms be able to assist us at this time? We do need to vote on our new membership. Uh, Ms. Bella has a report to give with regard to the new membership slate recommendations and has copies for everyone. As soon as we get all these distributed, I'll turn it over to Ms. Bella. Do all of the commission members now have a copy of the proposed slate with the Legislative Youth Advisory Council? At this time, I –, Ms. Bella, if you would please proceed with your report and thank you for all of your hard work in coordinating this each year.

Ms. Bella: Megan Bella, Senate staff and also the LYAC coordinator. Ah, you guys got the report, but I'll just give a brief, like, overview of how we do the process. Uh, members of this commission are –, score the applications. They are –, uh, so what we do is you take the top scores in each of the six congressional districts and then after that it's all the districts combined and the top scores overall from there. The thirty-one students are chosen through –, throughout the state. We had 161 applications this year and that's kind of it, I guess, but I'll be happy to answer any questions that you have about the process.

Judge Manning: Are there any questions at this time about the process before she gives the result and their recommendations –, the scoring committee, with regard to the slate –, uh, who they are recommending that we approve for the new members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. Any questions? Yes, uh, Representative Freiberg.

Rep. Freiberg: How do —, I —, I noticed, uh, absent here are any, uh, folks from my area. Uh, how are schools notified of this? Uh, how are the students notified of this opportunity?

Ms. Bella: So we send out —, primarily through e-mail. We send it out to schools, school boards, superintendents, uh, principals, word of mouth. We put out a press release, uh, you know, that type of thing. We rely pretty heavily on, like, schools to kind of get the word out to their students.

Rep. Freiberg: What time of year do you do this?

Ms. Bella: So the applications open in January.

Rep. Freiberg: In January?

Ms. Bella: And then the deadline is usually at the end of March.

Rep. Freiberg: Thank you.

Judge Manning: You welcome. Any other questions? At this time, Ms. Bella, would you please give the report, uh, the slate that you are asking us to consider?

Ms. Bella: Sure. So I apologize in advance if I mess up any of these names.

**Congressional District 1**

Eleanor Brooks	Lusher Charter School
Isabella Lancaster	Mount Carmel Academy
Sander McComiskey	Christ Episcopal School

**Congressional District 2**

Elliott Gomes	Benjamin Franklin High School
Jasmin Kumar	Benjamin Franklin High School
Aleyea Mogilles	Academy of the Sacred Heart

**Congressional District 3**

Anil Cacodcar	Episcopal School of Acadiana
Paresh Kolluru	Lafayette High School
Maggie Lai	Lafayette High School

**Congressional District 4**

Ananya Bhatia	Caddo Parish Magnet High School
Autumn Sommers	Caddo Parish Magnet High School
Ryan Wilkinson	Caddo Parish Magnet High School

**Congressional District 5**

Colden Russell	Caldwell Parish High School
Jaren St. Clair	Opelousas Catholic School
Morgan Elise Tradewell	Buckeye High School

**Congressional District 6**

Alexis Ellis	Destrehan High School
Taylor Sacco	Dutchtown High School
Harun Vemulapalli	Dutchtown High School

**At-Large Members**

Mohamad Habib	Lafayette High School
Reilyn Hilton	Sam Houston High School
Amanda Hux	Lafayette High School
Kaden Jackson	Grand Lake High School
Isaac Kim	Lafayette High School
Roma Kolluru	Lafayette High School
Ali Morgan Langlois	STEM Magnet Academy of Pointe Coupee
Alexander Minagar	Caddo Parish Magnet High School
Kendalyn Morgan	Ascension Episcopal High School
Sean Myers	Church Point High School
Mason Osborn	Lafayette High School
Matthew Pellitteri	Archbishop Hannan High School
Zoe Sissac	Houma Christian School

Judge Manning: That's the complete slate? That is the complete slate at this time?

Ms. Bella: Yes, sir.

Judge Manning: The chair then would entertain a motion that we approve the recommended slate of new members to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council for the period of 2021 through 2022. Hear a motion?

Mr. Butler: Motion to approve.

Judge Manning: Properly moved by Mr. Butler. Is there a second?

Mr. Jeansonne: Second.

Judge Manning: Seconded by Mr. Jeansonne. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Commissioner Members: Aye.

Judge Manning: Any opposed? No. Any abstentions? Motion carries. Let me at this time then on behalf of our commission congratulate all the members, the new members, of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. We had some phenomenal applications this year. A large number of applications. For those who were not able to be on this particular slate, we would encourage you to please keep this in mind for next year to submit timely your application. We thank you all for your application and your hard work and, uh, your interest in the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2021-2022 membership on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. There being no objection, the recommendations were approved.

**WITNESSES PRESENT:**

**Information Only:**

Megan Bella, LYAC, Baton Rouge, LA

**B. LYAC Update: 2020-2021 Members**

Judge Manning: Now we'll move forward with a report and an update from the work of the members of the, uh, existing Legislative Youth Advisory Council. We do have three representatives here who are speaking to us. And let me, uh, read off their names. We have Mr. Ashton Lee, Mr. Steffek Rainey, and Mr. Anil Cacodcar.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Anil Cacodcar representing Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC).

Mr. Cacodcar: Uh, Anil Cacodcar.

Judge Manning: Thank you. I apologize for the mispronunciation. Who would like to go first?

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Steffeck Rainey, representing LYAC.

Mr. Rainey: I'll go first. Uh, I'm Steffeck Rainey. I'm a senior at Catholic High School. And, uh, this year in LYAC, uh, by vote of the council we split up into four different committees to –, uh, to discuss different issues that were important to us. And we –, uh, the first one being the Environmental Committee which I was on and that one –, we discussed, uh, reducing single-use plastics in businesses and, uh, a type of a reward system for –, for green schools. And the second committee was Mental Health, uh, which focused on banning corporal punishment in schools. And, uh, from that one, Senator Cleo Fields actually authored a Senate Concurrent Resolution to –, to do that and it's, uh, moving forward in the process right now. And our, uh, Social Justice Committee focused on, uh, race relations and how to improve that within, uh, schools and teaching certain literature and school curriculums and things like that. And, uh, lastly –, what was the other thing? Yeah, Social –. Wait. Social Justice. Yeah, and then an Education Committee, I think. Education also , uh, oh yeah, Education did the –, uh, teaching the dangers of vaping in schools. And, so, uh, now I'll pass it on.

Judge Manning: Very good.

Mr. Cacodcar: So one of the most important aspects of LYAC that I found this year was really fostering that relationship between elected officials and just members of the government and the youth. So throughout the year, we had a variety of guest speakers come and talk to us whether it was about their legislative work or just their careers. How did they get started in politics. So we started off the year by, uh, getting to talk to House Speaker Clay Schexnayder and it was a very productive conversation. And, uh, we found him a really engaging speaker. And we –, we thank all of our speakers for coming, but we really enjoyed him taking the time to talk to all of us. Uh, we then, uh, had a lecture from Louisiana School Safety Program about their upcoming app, uh, for emergency preparedness in schools related to disasters. Uh, we also had a former member of LYAC who now is the president of the Youth Advocacy Team, uh, Madeline Malboro, uh, come talk to us as well about her speak –, about her experience, uh, as a student, uh, pursuing that career path. We also had Representative, uh, Mandy Landry come talk to us about her experience, uh, in the legislature as a –, as a new representative. And, uh, we also had, uh, Representative Garofalo come talk to us about his legislation and a bit about how he started in the –, the –, the House. And with that, I'll pass it off to you.

Judge Manning: Well, and before we pass it on, would you please restate your name for the record so that we'll know who was just speaking?

Mr. Cacodcar: Oh, yes. Yes. Uh, I'm Anil Cacodcar. I'm a junior from the Episcopal School of Acadiana in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Judge Manning: Thank you. And you, sir?

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Ashton Lee, representing LYAC.

Mr. Lee: Uh, yes. I'm Ashton Lee. I go to Hammond High Magnet School. Just forty-five minutes away or an hour with traffic. Uh, but, yes, uh, I was telling Megan I was pulling up my Snapchat memories and it popped up, two years ago. Uh, I remember at the beach running across the road burning my feet that I was so excited that I had got on Legislative Youth Advisory Council. You can ask –, uh, if you ask any of my parents or any of my family members, they were just –, we were just so excited that –, that I got on there. And it's crazy to me to be speaking in front of ya'll two years later. Uh, in regards to the legislation, the nitty gritty, the things we, you know, never get to do as just like a bystander, but now we're able to do it hands on, uh, luckily, like, uh, the stuff that got said. Uh, Senator Fields, uh, Chairman Fields of the Education Committee in the Senate, authored, uh, Senate Concurrent Resolution 18 which as we talked about in the Mental Health Committee would, uh, study the ban of corporal punishment. Uh, luckily, I was able to testify in both the House and Senate Education committees. Uh, both in those –, both committees respectively, we passed favorably and hopefully it will be brought up to, uh, debate on the House floor. And if no amendments are added to it, uh, it will be passed hopefully and will become law. Uh, it's something we are very passionate about. Uh, something with hands on experience that all the members now appointed –. I don't know if ya'll are still listening to the thing or if ya'll are just cheering right now, but it's a great experience. I was very blessed to serve on the council for two years and I'm looking forward to, uh, using what I've learned from LYAC, uh, over these past two years and to serve my community in other ways. So thank ya'll for your time.

Judge Manning: Well, thank the three of you for your service over this past year and for your reports and your update. Let me invite the members of the commission if they have any questions to pose at this time. Anyone?

Rep. Freiberg: I'll make a comment. Uh, on. I never got turned off. Uh, the young man from Hammond High, your name again?

Mr. Lee: Oh, Ashton Lee.

Rep. Freiberg: I remember you testifying in, uh, Education the other day or a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Lee: Yes, ma'am.

Rep. Freiberg: And I don't remember what bill it was. What bill was it?

Mr. Lee: Uh, it was Senator Fields'.

Rep. Freiberg: Senator Fields.

Mr. Lee: Yes, ma'am.

Rep. Freiberg: You do know there was a bill, not a resolution, that failed in, uh, House, so.

Mr. Lee: Yes, ma'am.

Rep. Freiberg: Keep working on that one.

Mr. Lee: Well, Representative Freiberg, hopefully ya'll can pass our resolution.

Rep. Freiberg: Yes, absolutely. I –, I agree with you, but, uh, thanks for being there that day.

Mr. Lee: Thank you.

Rep. Freiberg: Appreciate it.

Judge Manning: Uh, Mr. Shutt. Did you –?

Mr. Shutt: No. I'm doing fine. Thank you.

Judge Manning: I thought –. Your light was on. Anyone else? Mr. Erwin.

Mr. Erwin: Yeah. I just want to, uh, congratulate you on your service and, uh, I've been on this thing I think since the beginning and honestly, you know, one of the real highlights of being on this commission every year is having, uh, members of LYAC come and talk about their experiences and –, and that type of thing and I really appreciate that. And I also do some work with LPB and we're really glad that ya'll are able to participate in those, uh, Public Square programs. And, uh, I think we have one coming up that we're shooting next week and I hope

some folks will be there for that on Early Childhood. My only question was are ya'll all seniors or – ?

Mr. Cacodcar: I'm a junior.

Mr. Erwin: You're a junior.

Mr. Rainey: I'm a senior. I actually graduate tomorrow.

Mr. Erwin: Oh, you do.

Judge Manning: Congratulations.

Mr. Rainey: Thank you.

Mr. Erwin: I was just curious of what your future plans are. I –, I don't want to force the underclassman to already commit to anything, but I was just curious if –, what your future plans were.

Mr. Rainey: Uh, I'm going to go to the University of San Diego next year.

Mr. Erwin: Yeah.

Mr. Lee: I'm –, I'm a junior, but my plans are to major in Political Science, minor in Elections and then get my masters in Public Advocacy.

Mr. Erwin: That's great.

Mr. Cacodcar: Yeah, they have it all planned out. I –, I feel like I should embrace the journey of serendipity and, uh, I still have a year to decide, but I'm leaning towards health policy as –, as a specific interest of mine.

Mr. Erwin: Well, thanks. Well, it's really great to hear that and appreciate your –, your work on the, uh, council.

Mr. Shutt: (Inaudible) things that's not all about money, you know, and that's –, that's what's important. That's something that's missing I think in our –, in our society today, you know. So I commend you on that as young as you are, not –, not giving –, not overlooking that. Do something you love.



Judge Manning: Any other questions or comments from any of the commission members? Again, thank the three of you for your presentation. We do –, uh, just one second. Uh, Mr. Bernard.

Mr. Bernard: You know, uh, it's always exciting to hear young guys, uh, get out there and –, and speak what they feel and, uh, one other thing I would like to ask you guys, uh, how actually are the relation –, race relations among you guys between different ethnic groups? Are you guys able to have those honest, candid conversations?

Mr. Cacodcar: So, I'll start it off by introducing what my perspective on this is. So, I –, I was born in Portugal. My mom is from Lithuania and my dad was born in Mozambique so that's quite the –, the gumbo pot of different cultures. And I have a friend group that I'd like to think is pretty diverse in terms of both culture, ethnicity, and, uh, uh, national origin. And what we're seeing as youth is we get along pretty well because, I mean, we're not adults yet, but we look into the world and we see all this chaos and we think, "Oh my God. What –, why is this happening?" And it –, it really feels like we're powerless, but at times we –, we're comfortable because we know in the future we have confidence in ourselves to be able to fix those issues that exist when we look out through a window.

Judge Manning: Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Thank you for being with us and for those who are graduating, tomorrow especially, congratulations. Wish you the best in the future.

**WITNESSES PRESENT:**

**Information Only:**

Anil Cacodcar, LYAC, Lafayette, LA  
Ashton Lee, LYAC, Loranger, LA  
Steffek Rainey, LYAC, Baton Rouge, LA

**C. Legislators Back to School Program update: Lauren Russell and Mary Bean**

Judge Manning: We'll now have a report from Ms. Bean and Ms. Ladner regarding the Legislators Back to School Program update. Yes. Uh, yes, Mr. Butler. You have a question or comment?

Mr. Butler: Uh, comment.

Judge Manning: Yes, sir.

Mr. Butler: I'd just like also to thank the staff who works with these young people. I can definitely attest to the long hours and hard work that they put into supporting that cause, often times behind the scenes. And I just want, ah, to very much give them a shout out.

Judge Manning: Thank you, Mr. Butler. I think all of us share in that sentiment. Now we will continue with our Legislators Back to School Program update.

Ms. Ladner: All right. So I'm Lauren Ladner. Uh, I work in the Louis-, uh, Legislative Communications Office (LCO) which is newly developed. We were previously separate, House and Senate, and we've since come together in a joint communications office. Uh, I work with Ms. Mary Bean and together we do the Back to School Program. So I mostly work with the House and she mostly works with senators. And we've had a lot of changes since our last meeting. Uh, Mary just took over the Senate side. Uh, and with all the pandemic stuff still going on, we've only had a handful of visits between the two of us. Uh, so instead of harping a whole lot on our lack of Back to School participation, I'd like to take your time to talk about our plans to fix that and the things that we have coming up because we do have a lot of changes. So since our office is now a joint effort, uh, we can work together. We can share materials. We can share a more united experience so senators and House members are going and presenting similar things to students and they can also go on joint visits, uh, so they can go together. Uh, and I think that -, that would encourage people a little bit more not having to go by themselves if they're intimidated by speaking to students in the first place. Uh, so that's good. And then we've also revamped our website. We have a new LCO website and it has a whole kids page on it. Uh, so if you want to visit that, we can give you the link to that as well. Um, and so right now we're working on new materials. We were previously getting material from NCSL and they do still have a little bit available. They don't send it to us anymore but even the materials that are available are at least 10-12 years old. So we're going to take steps to print and come up with new materials. So in elementary and middle school, it will be focused on a color and activity book and Mary will talk a little bit about that in just a minute as far as content goes. Uh, we have the means of printing and, uh, distributing all of those. And then for middle school and high school, we're trying to focus a little bit more on debate. So, uh, legislators will have more control over the conversation and it will be a little bit more in tune with the curriculum that they are already learning with civics in high school. Uh, and then, uh, let's see, we will have better access to these materials with our website and we're also going to try and implement a form so that both legislators and teachers can request a visit. And we think that if the requests are coming from schools, from teachers themselves, it could encourage legislators to get more involved as well. Uh, so with students going back in to the classroom, we'll be looking to implement that. Uh, coming up towards the end of session, our office is going to put out a kind of a commercial, uh, to encourage legislators, uh, so we're going to try and work a little bit on that too. We just have a

lot more resources so we're pretty excited about that. Uh, Mary will talk a little bit about her idea for the coloring books, uh, so I'll just hand that over.

Ms. Bean: Okay. Um, I'm Mary Bean. I also work in the Legislative Communications Office and I work, uh, the Back –, the Back to School Program and I work for the Senate. Uh, so as Lauren already mentioned, the coloring books and some of the materials that we have are at least a decade old and you can kind of tell that. So I think she also said –, mentioned that we are going to be creating a new updated version of the coloring book. So our idea is to hold a statewide art contest among schools and students where students can submit their artwork to be included in the book. Uh, it may end up being on the cover or throughout the book. We're still working out the details. Uh, there will be an online submission form on our website where students and teachers and schools can submit, uh, their art work. We'll also have a mail-in option for schools that aren't –, or students that maybe aren't so technologically –. Oh, well. Uh, so we're still working on the ideas of how to advertise the art contest. Uh, we're also, uh, working out whether or not we're going to take the top three or the top ten entries or whether it's going to be a statewide or by districts. Because we're a joint office now, uh, we've talked a little bit about doing it by congressional districts, and really –, and towards maybe –, the top three, uh, submissions per each congressional district. Uh, and yeah, so that's where we are with our coloring book, but we'd love any ideas that anyone on this commission has about that idea.

Judge Manning: Well, thank you both for your update. Let me invite the commission members if they have any questions or comments. And I'm trying to see –, here we have Mr. Ince. You have your –, uh, indicated you have a comment?

Mr. Ince: Yes, sir. Uh.

Judge Manning: There's a glare up here so if I'm a little slow on pushing the button I apologize, but I can't see this very well.

Mr. Ince: Uh, yes. I just would like to say thank you for that update and, uh, if the Louisiana Lieutenant Governor's Office can be of any assistance with the, uh, art program, you know, we have the, ah, statewide arts council that operates under DCRT. If we can be of any –, any assistance, uh, please do not hesitate to reach out. I can give both you ya'll my card. Thank you.

Ms. Ladner: Thank you.

Judge Manning: Representative Freiberg.

Rep. Freiberg: Yes. Actually, uh, two other representatives and I were talking about the coloring books yesterday at lunch as a matter of fact. Uh, what will be –, what is the content of the coloring books? Elementary students. They were very, very helpful in giving a lot of good information about the state, uh, about the legislature. So the drawings would –, I'm trying to figure out how the drawings and the content –, how you are going to match them up?

Ms. Ladner: Okay. We're not going to veer too far away from –, the content right now is mostly this is our state bird, this is our state, you know, yes, flower, flag and then, uh, at the very beginning we'd talk a little bit about the State Capitol and –, and we go into detail about stuff like that. Uh, we'll stay on those lines, but we're trying to make the graphics a little bit better. Uh, a whole page of just a strawberry might not be that entertaining for a kid, you know. And, uh, I know Mary had some ideas.

Ms. Bean: Uh, yeah, our office, uh, we –, we recently have hired a graphic designer. So one of –, one of our ideas was to have the arts division because that would be the –, the art that the students would be creating would be the flag or it would be a picture of the Capitol or a picture of the state bird or –, or flower or whatever like Lauren said. Uh, and one of our ideas was to have our graphic designer take that and maybe design a cover for the book using their designs because sometimes it may be hard to –, to color in something that someone –. I mean, because the –. Well, let's just say that the art exhibitions will be probably colorful. They won't be the –, the –, the pieces that students will be coloring inside the book.

Rep. Freiberg: Got you.

Ms. Bean: So we may end up using that for the cover and having a graphic designer do that. But then it would be cool for the kids to be able to see or students to be able to see the artwork on the cover and know that it's throughout the entire state.

Rep. Freiberg: I know at one point I was told about the coloring books, uh, but I had forgotten about them until our conversation yesterday. And that is an excellent teaching tool and I hope when the new one gets put together that ya'll will let us all know so that we can disseminate them in our parishes.

Ms. Ladner: Absolutely, Uh, we're making outreach kind of our main goal. Uh, just making sure that all legislators are made super aware of the program. Right when session's over, when you're going back home, and then again, uh, third week of September when the program starts. And we'll do our best to keep –, just keep the reminders coming. Thank you. Yeah.

Rep. Freiberg: Right. Thank you, Lauren.

Judge Manning: Any other questions or comments? Well, thank you both for your update. We wish you the best as you move forward with the plans in this new merged office and I hope this continues to move forward in a –, a good fashion for you.

Ms. Ladner: Thank you.

Ms. Bean: Thank you.

Judge Manning: You welcome.

**D. Civic Education Events Calendar update: Peggy Cotogno**

Judge Manning: Our remaining item we have on our agenda –, well, our next to the last item, we have an update on the Civic Education Events Calendar from Ms. Peggy Cotogno.

Ms. Cotogno: Well, we have good news. At the last, uh, two meetings, we –, uh, we showed everyone that was here the –, the calendar and at the last meeting pretty much finalized everything except we needed a disclaimer statement. And we have a disclaimer statement that the Senate is comfortable with. I'm talking about a calendar of events that is the Commission on Civic Education's –, uh, uh, Civic Education's events calendar. And so that would for instance, uh, they can't hear me? That, for instance, uh, would be a good way to, uh, let everybody, anybody, the entire public know about LYAC for instance. Because we will –, we'll put up on the calendar, you know, when it is open for, uh, applications and when the deadline is. And also there'll be a link to the site which gives them all of the information they could possibly need. So that kind of answers one of your questions, uh, Representative Freiberg. I also wanted to let you know that Megan has done a lot as far as spreading the word. One of the things that she did, uh, well, about two years ago before the pandemic, was she addressed the General Assembly –, Assembly of the Louisiana Council for Social Studies and she brought one of her LYAC students with her. And so all of the teachers there were given a, you know, personal, uh, description of the program and it was wonderful, you know, so she's doing a lot. And I will say one other thing, I have a newsletter that goes out about four times a year to around 8,000 educators, uh, and, uh, and then an additional 10,000, uh, attorneys and legal people, but we also put that in there. So it is being disseminated, but you can't do too much, right? So, all right. So, uh, this is –. I'm looking to see if the calendar is up here. I don't see it. Hold on. Oh, okay. Oh, okay. But we covered this. Just –, everybody here has seen it. It's a typical calendar where the public will have access.

Judge Manning: Peggy, can we pause for a moment? So we can –, because the people streaming via live stream haven't –. So let's pause for a moment so they can pull it up. Just once second.

Ms. Cotogno: All right. Okay. This is my website. This is -. We would -. Oh, he's not -.

Judge Manning: Just one second. We're going to now -.

Ms. Cotogno: Okay.

Judge Manning: All right. You'll walk us through. How do we find -, how do we find the Civic Education events calendar?

Ms. Cotogno: All righty. It's on my website right now. We're hoping that everyone here can get it on their website. It's going to be on the Commission for Civic Education's website. And basically this is the icon for the calendar. See right there. And you just click on it and it goes straight to the disclaimer statement so that everybody using it has to read it. I'm trying to see how do you -. All righty. So to proceed to the actual, uh, calendar, it says -, it says to click on the icon and there you are. Yeah. So if you have anything to put in the calendar, just e-mail me and I'll get it up there and, uh, we're all set to go. In your folders is the -, is a disclaimer statement. Uh, Judge Manning, did you want everyone to read it and -?

Judge Manning: If we could pause for a moment and I would ask if there are any comments or objections to the disclaimer language? This was developed by the -, uh, through the Senate. And as you may recall, I think Representative Carter -, you last Spring approved the procedures and policies for, uh, how we would solicit events to be published on the calendar. This was the one remaining piece, was the disclaimer. Yes, sir. Just one second. Let me -, uh, there we go.

Representative Carter: Thank you.

Judge Manning: Yes, sir.

Representative Carter: Thank you. I don't know if I'm on.

Judge Manning: Yes, sir. You are.

Representative Carter: Okay. Thank you. I'm looking at the language at the disclaimer, uh, and it looks fine. I have a question about the use of one word. Uh, it has, "The information on this website is a service to the public by the Louisiana legislature and the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education. Any reference to organizations, commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trade mark, manufacturer or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply as an endorsement or recommendation by the legislature." My question is the use of the word "necessarily". Uh, can we just have it that the use of "trade -, trade name, trade mark,

manufacturer or otherwise does not constitute or imply as an endorsement or recommendation by the legislature, the commission or the state of Louisiana." Because I was worried about the use of the word "necessarily" because it implies that it –, it –, it –, perhaps we are endorsing it . . .

Judge Manning: Yes, sir.

Rep. Carter: . . . or recommending it but not necessarily. So the use of that word was the only thing that I found vague. Uh.

Judge Manning: And, again, this was produced by who? The Chief of Staff on the Senate side.

Rep. Carter: It's just a suggestion.

Judge Manning: So, so it –, I think that's a wise suggestion, Representative. We'll make sure that's incorporated into the disclaimer. Any other comments or suggestions? All right, Ms. Davis.

Ms. Davis: We could change the word "make" in the third line to "makes" so that it has correct subject/verb agreement.

Judge Manning: On the third line.

Ms. Davis: I mean third from the bottom.

Judge Manning: Oh, third from the bottom. Okay. All right. Thank you. Any other suggestions or comments? Thank you. So with those two changes then, uh, Ms. Cotogno will make those modifications to the disclaimer. Thank you for all of your hard work. And it's also on the commission website, the link as well as the disclaimer. And as Ms. Cotogno has said, we would encourage all of our member organizations to please provide a link to the Civic Education events calendar. That's one of our core duties and functions of the commission is to develop this calendar. So it's taken us two years and I'm glad that it's come to fruition.

Ms. Cotogno: Um hmm. You know the Senate –, somebody from the Senate or myself will send you the image and the URL you will need to link it to. It's very simple. It's, like, three clicks to put it on your website.

Judge Manning: Now the question that some of our commission members may have or some of the audience or viewers may have, how can their organization solicit or get their events on the calendar? And there were a set of procedures that were approved at our Spring meeting of last

year. And there's a template that you had developed, uh, of the information that you must have to be able to populate that information on the calendar. So, uh.

Ms. Cotogno: I did not bring that up here with me. Do you have it?

Judge Manning: No. I'm just saying we need to circulate that again to our commission members.

Ms. Cotogno: Okay. I'll send it.

Judge Manning: So everyone will have that template.

Ms. Cotogno: Okay. I'll have that –, I'll send that at the same time.

Judge Manning: Thank you.

Ms. Cotogno: That should be happening real soon.

Judge Manning: Any other questions or comments? Again, thank you. Thanks, Peggy.

#### **E. Social Studies Content Standards Committee update: Ryan Gremillion**

Judge Manning: We'll move now to our remaining item on the agenda. Social Studies Content Standards Committee. Mr. Gremillion, would you introduce the representatives from the Department of Education that we have with us today.

Mr. Gremillion: Yeah, so every –, our policy dictates that every seven years our academic content standards must be reviewed by BESE. If you remember in 2016, we reviewed ELA in math; 2017, we –, we reviewed science and P.E.; and next up in the cycle is, uh, social studies. We've begun that work here over the last couple of months and I have a couple of team members from the Department of Ed, Chanda Johnson who is our deputy assistant superintendent of Academic Content and, uh, Samantha Chaisson who, uh, is also on Chanda's team. They both are in the Office of Teaching and Learning and have been instrumental with this work. And I will turn it over to them at this point.

Judge Manning: We welcome you and would each of you please restate your name as you begin to speak and your title with the, uh, department. Thank you.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Chanda Johnson, representing Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).



Ms. Johnson: Good afternoon. My name is Chanda Johnson. I'm Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Academic Content.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Samantha Chaisson, representing LDOE. She presented a PowerPoint to the commission. A copy was made part of the public record.

Ms. Chaisson: And my name is Samantha Chaisson. I –, uh, I'm on the Academic Content team. I work specifically with Social Studies.

Judge Manning: Thank you.

Ms. Johnson: So I've prepared just a few slides to work through with you guys, but if you have any questions just let me know. Uh, the mouse, the mouse. Oh, here we go. So as Ryan mentioned before, uh, our –, our standards are on a seven-year review cycle so next up in our list of –, of content areas to review is social studies. Our last revision was in 2010-2011 so we're excited to start this process. In December of 2020, BESE voted for us to do a review of our standards, uh, and LDOE at that point opened applications, uh, for people who wanted to participate in the work of revising those standards. That application was opened. We had applications submitted from Louisiana teachers, school systems, staff, uh, administration, building level administrators, central office administrators, parents, students, community members. So we had a lot of applications. A lot of interest in this work. So this is a high-level time line of what this work is going to look like. As I mentioned before, we kicked off this standards revision process in December with the release of that application. Uh, in March of this year, we brought the committees that were selected from the applications to BESE for approval. We're currently working on the actual writing of the standards in –, in different work groups. That work started in March. Uh, that work started in March and it's going to continue through July. In August, the standards will all be posted for review from the public. Uh, we plan on presenting the final standards to BESE in October of this year for their final approval. And we're going to provide professional development to Louisiana educators around the social studies work in the 2021-2022 school year. Uh, we're working towards implementation of the –, these social studies standards in 2022-2023. So we have five different revision goals for our social studies standards, uh, that BESE approved and tasked the committees with focusing on. So the first is a shift to inquiry-based instruction in social studies. Uh, and this is really a lot about a balance between acquisition of knowledge and learning the skills of social studies. Our second is a more coherent sequence of content to make sure that students are able to understand how the different knowledge that they learn in their class fits together. The third is to make sure that we're focusing on social studies and elementary social studies isn't something that should just happen in middle school or in high school. Our fourth goal was to make sure that we are doing a better

job integrating the historical perspectives of people from all kinds of different backgrounds. And the fifth, uh, is to make sure that we're helping students and providing them with opportunities to develop strong critical thinking skills. Oh, I pressed that too hard. So these are our overall guiding principles as we're doing the social studies revision process. First is to make sure that we have a diversity of perspectives. So we worked hard to ensure that our committee membership, both in our steering committee and in the work groups that are drafting the standards, represented the geographic and demographic diversity of our state's student population. And, of course, as with all of our standards revisions processes we're going to make sure that the public has a chance to provide input. Uh, every single standard is going to be posted and the public will have an opportunity to comment on every single standard. And, of course, the steering committee meetings are open to the public and the public can attend and provide a comment there as well. So this is just a quick overview of what the committee organization looks like. So we have a steering committee of twenty-eight members. Two of those members are non-voting. They are BESE representatives. That committee guides the process, uh, and as the standards are revised they are brought to this committee, uh, so that we can get guidance from them as the work continues. That committee is going to make the final recommendation to BESE, uh, about what they think those final social standards should be. Then we have two different content work groups. So these are the groups of educators who have been actually writing the social studies standards. So, uh, I've -, I've watched them work and it is extremely humbling. Uh, I've seen small -, small -, subsets of this -, of these workgroups gather on Saturdays and work for six hours at a time drafting these social studies standards to make sure that they are doing the best work they can for Louisiana students. It's been incredibly humbling. But they're actually working on writing the standards. Every single word, they're weighing. Like, should it be this word or should it be that -, this word. They're taking the responsibility very seriously. But they're drafting standards and again those standards are then going to be brought to the steering committee. And we -, we have representation from the steering committee in the work group. So we've had one steering committee meeting and there were two big take-aways from that first meeting. The first is the content work groups were tasked with drafting inquiry standards. So essentially -, uh, yeah, a lot of times when you think of social studies standards, you think of just a list of, like, facts that students should learn. With inquiry standards, we're really getting at what are some of the skills that students should develop in terms of social studies. So it's a -, it's part of the overall standards, but, uh, the committee made it clear that we needed to put that in writing: what are the social studies skills students should learn. Then they also, uh, approved a revision of the course progression for social studies standards, uh, and part of that was ensuring that we had a focus of Louisiana history in multiple courses. So, um, our Louisiana history is going to be embedded with Louis -, uh, with U. S. history through three grade levels instead of two like we prior -, we had prior to this. Uh, and here, just in case you wanted to learn more about what I meant when I said inquiry instruction. Uh, this is an overview, but again this is really focused on students being involved in their own learning. It's not about just memorizing

facts. So students pose questions, uh, basic think-through problems in different scenarios. Again it's not just about sitting and copying a PowerPoint and just memorizing a list of facts. And so there are some bullets here if you are interested in learning more. And then I also wanted to make sure that you saw the revised course progression that was approved from this year in committee. Uh, as you're looking at this, uh, do –, do note that history, geography, economics, and civics are actually going to be embedded in each of these courses. So there'll –, there'll be a heavy emphasis on each of those topics throughout. And as I mentioned before, you'll notice Louisiana studies is now embedded with U. S. history for three whole years so, uh, I'm excited personally about that. And so here is kind of a time line of what this work is going to look like. As I mentioned before, we kicked all of this work off in October at our BESE meeting. Uh, the social studies IMR process, which –, that stands for Instructional Materials Review, that's the process by which Louisiana educators look at the curriculum that's out there and –, uh, about social studies and they review it. Uh, they look at it alongside the standards to see if it's appropriate for Louisiana students. That process is going to –, going to run through the 2021-2022 school year. During that time, LDOE is also going to provide different resources and PD's to Louisiana educators to make sure that they are prepared for those new standards. The actual implementation of the standards is going to happen in '22-'23 and then in '23-'24 we'll have the new social studies assessment. I know that's a question that I get a lot. So if you would like more information, uh, I –, I assume you all have a digital copy of this, I included a link to the Standards Review Committee Library and you'll find some different resources there or you can always e-mail me. That's my e-mail address [Chanda.Johnson@la.gov](mailto:Chanda.Johnson@la.gov) and I'm happy to answer any questions that you have.

Judge Manning: Uh, the chair has a question. With regard to the slides that are being presented in the PowerPoint, how can we get the slides to our commission members? Would you be able to provide those to Mr. Gremillion and he could then circulate them to the commission members? Will that –?

Ms. Johnson: Yes. I think he has them.

Judge Manning: Okay. Great. Also, when is the next steering committee meeting that's open to the public.

Ms. Johnson: June 26<sup>th</sup>?

Judge Manning: I'm –. Say –?

Ms. Chaisson: June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Judge Manning: Where will it be located?

Ms. Johnson: It's at the Clairborne Building on the first floor in the Thomas Jefferson Room. And I do apologize, it's a Saturday, uh, so sorry about that.

Judge Manning: What time does it normally start?

Ms. Johnson: We start at nine. Is that right? It's nine until finish so it might be eleven. It might be two. It might be six o'clock. Hopefully, not six o'clock, but, yeah.

Judge Manning: Where might we find the list of the members of the steering committee?

Ms. Johnson: You'll find them on that link, right? Uh, and you'll get a digital copy. And if you click on that, you'll see a link there.

Judge Manning: Thank you. Any questions from the members of the commission? Uh, yes, Mr. Butler.

Mr. Butler: Thank you. Uh, my only question is on the steering committee, are there any representatives from the Louisiana/Parent Teachers Association?

Ms. Johnson: I don't know. I don't know if we –. We don't have that particular organization listed as having to have a member, but we do have parent repre –, representatives on the committee as well as students.

Mr. Butler: And how did you go about selecting those parent representatives?

Ms. Johnson: They applied. It was a self-nomination process and whoever wanted to be on the committee filled an application and then the applications were –, were scored blindly without looking at any identifying information.

Mr. Butler: And how was that information advertised to apply?

Ms. Johnson: So it went out in our newsletter from LDOE. It was announced at the BESE meeting as well.

Mr. Butler: Okay. Thank you.

Judge Manning: Thank you, Mr. Butler. Other questions? We have, uh, Mr. Erwin.

Mr. Erwin: Yeah, thank you. Uh, you touched on this already, but I was just hoping you could touch on it again. Uh, could you talk a little bit again about, you know, the quality of the educators that you have serving on these committees and how they were chosen, uh, to serve? Their expertise or their experience with social studies and that type of thing?

Ms. Johnson: Absolutely. So Louisiana educators are some of my favorite people in the whole world. Uh, we have both K-12 teachers and college, uh, social studies pro -, uh, experts as well on the committee. Uh, they told us how many years they had taught social studies. About -, that -, that went into when we scored the applications. Uh, we also looked at how many social studies courses they had taught because we knew we had to write standards for all of K-12. So a teacher who had experience for many years across grades 3, 4, and 5 for example, uh, scored a little higher than a teacher who had only taught one grade level because we knew they could help us kind of make connections across grade levels. Uh, and that was the biggest part of -, of what went into our teachers.

Mr. Erwin: And so it's a pretty diverse group it sounds like.

Ms. Johnson: It -, it is. We made sure that it reflected the diversity of our students and our state.

Mr. Erwin: And, uh, how have the sessions gone, I mean, just in general? I mean social studies is -, uh, can be an interesting issue on -, in a lot of ways. I'm wondering how the -, how the work is going in the sessions and the work -.

Ms. Johnson: For me, honestly, it's been inspirational to see the dedication. I mentioned that our next meeting is on a Saturday. Our first steering committee meeting was actually on Saturday. I actually learned that you have to tell them to turn the air conditioner on on Saturdays. So fun fact when you do a Saturday meeting. Uh, but, you know, in that meeting, uh, there were some conversations that -, that got a little tense, but I think to do any work that's really important that little bit of -, of friction is necessary to end up in a good place. And we ended up, I feel, in a really good place. In the smaller groups, we -, the teachers had been working a lot asynchronously and then they would hop on a Zoom sometimes and talk through, uh, you know, "I think this standard's good". "No, I think this should be written this way." And like I said, they're fine tuning every word and every standard. Um, every conversation I -, I've heard has been respectful, but that's not shocking to me given that it's Louisiana educators doing the work. Uh, so for me, everything I've seen, it's just been, like I said, a real inspiration to see.

Mr. Erwin: That's great. Well, thank you.

Ms. Johnson: Thank you.

Judge Manning: Ms. Davis.

Ms. Davis: Hey, Chanda.

Ms. Johnson: Hey.

Ms. Davis: Uh, you mentioned, uh, curriculum when you were going over this. It's not that you evaluate curriculums, right? It's more about materials?

Ms. Johnson: Yeah. So I –, I used the word curriculum, but, yeah, we mean instructional materials especially in the social studies place. Uh, I think, we always hope that we can find lots of Tier I options. For those of you who aren't familiar, for the instructional materials in the review process we created a rubric. Uh, that rubric is based on the standards themselves. And Louisiana educators, uh, look at different types of instructional materials to see if they're in alignment with those standards and if they're, uh, going to be easy for teachers to use and right for Louisiana students. And so as part of that process, uh, we invite publishers to submit materials for us sometimes. What we typically think of as curriculum, it's like a hard text book. Uh, I've been in this process for a long time and it's increasingly –, it looks less like that hard text book and more like here's a link to all of my digital materials and, uh, it's different modules and it's a lot more flexible. So we are going to invite publishers to submit instructional materials and see what they give us. Uh, social studies, I think, is going to be a little different than what we are used to seeing with ELA in math because state to state the standards vary. As I mentioned we're going to embed Louisiana history across three different years. So I think publishers are going to be a little more nimble with what they submit, but I'm super excited to see.

Ms. Davis: But, I'm not –. I apologize. So just to be clear, who selects the curriculums that are used? Who?

Ms. Johnson: Local schools. Local schools. Uh, every school system is best positioned to make curriculum decisions for their students. I would never tell a school system this is the curriculum you should use. It's not my place to do it because they know their students better than I do. So what we do is we provide information. I mentioned that tiering process. So what we do in that process is we send a signal as a service to our school systems. We say these materials are completely out of line to the standards. They are Tier 1. If they're Tier 2, we say, ah, they're pretty good. Like, they're –, they're aligned, but could use a little bit of work. And then Tier 3 means that we need a little bit more work done on those materials. And again that is a service that we provide because school systems, uh, have tons of things to do and they're really busy so we provide that so they don't have to do a local process. They can still do a local re –, review

process if they choose to do so. And if they want to do that my team provides support on this, is what it would look like to run that –, that, uh, type of process.

Ms. Davis: Okay. And can you tell us how you –, are you having, uh, large attendance from the public at these meetings? Have there been many persons?

Ms. Johnson: At the first meeting, we had maybe fifteen or twenty people maybe. It wasn't a lot of people. Uh, I –, I suspect in June we have more –, more people. Uh, we do livestream so anyone who wants to watch from home has that option. I think up until this point it's just been a little tough. Uh, the last year has been tough to get groups of people together.

Ms. Davis: And, so I just wanted to let everyone know that when the standards do go to the board, they are not only approved at that point in time, but they are placed in a bulletin which will be advertised as a Notice of Intent for a certain amount of time for –. It takes about a five-month process, but there's a small window for public comments. So there's also an opportunity if folks don't attend those meetings, they can attend a BESE meeting whereby they are presented or they can write in comments once it is advertised that there's a Notice of Intent. So there's plenty of opportunities for comment. Thanks.

Ms. Johnson: Thank you.

Judge Manning: Thanks for pointing that out, Ms. Davis. Mr. Bernard.

Mr. Bernard: Thank you. Uh, I appreciate your, uh, presentation. I have some questions in regards to the diversity. Uh, can you explain what that is? Can you give me a little more detail as to, you know, diverse opinion as to what in terms of top –, topics, uh, will we sacrifice, uh, objective truth for diversity? Or will diversity just be, you know what, we're –, we're here to give our input but here are certain standards that we'll adhere to no matter what?

Ms. Johnson: So, I think, can you –, can you restate your question you were asking?

Mr. Bernard: Will diversity –? You know, often times you'll hear about diversity. Uh, we do have diverse, different groups from across the population, but there –, there's always a standard that we have to adhere to. And the end –, the end goal should always be able to pro –, uh, to promote students and also have them become productive members of society, uh, irrespective of their ethnic or socioeconomic background. Will we sacrifice, uh, those, our objectivity, our truth for diversity just to be the in thing? Because, you know, a lot of curriculums seems to be going that –, that way.

Ms. Johnson: Yeah.

Mr. Bernard: How do we prevent that?

Ms. Johnson: Yeah. So I –, I think at the heart of all the work we're doing is ensuring that we produce really high-quality social studies standards. Like, that has to be the number one goal here. Uh, when we were reviewing applications, we ensured that we had a question that asked that applicants to tell us, uh, you know, are you willing to revise the standards? Are you willing to –, to have these difficult types of conversations to ensure that we look at everyone's viewpoints? That, uh, the –, the, uh, standards make sure that we're pushing students to ask questions and think for themselves as they're looking at history. And so I feel confident that those questions that's asked in the applications ensure that the people who ended up on the committees really were open to creating standards. Uh, that helps all of Louisiana's students to learn social studies. So I think when you see the final standards, you'll –, you'll see that they are going to help our students learn social studies. Uh, civics is going to be a strong thread throughout. I'm excited about that. Uh, and like I said, our educators are just so committed to get –, to getting this done right. And I'm excited to get the public comments once they are able to see the final product.

Mr. Bernard: And the reason why I asked that is because so often, you know, uh, we want to see things or –, we want to always be inclusive, but at what cost. You know, we are behind in so many things in the state and I want to put –, you know, as a former athlete, I like performances. Not, you know, if you get the there, you get there. No, we –, we need to be putting our best foot forward. So that's the reason for that so for me the diversity is crucial. It's important to get all view points. But who will adhere and say, you know what, this is the standard we will uphold? So we'll have young –, young men, like, uh, young women who are coming up who will –, will adhere to those principles and not feel like they are being ostracized or, you know, being condemned because they are out performing other groups.

Judge Manning: Thank you, Mr. Bernard. Representative Freiberg.

Rep. Freiberg: I just want to confirm, uh, if –, I know you are sending us the link, but if I were just out there in the general public and I wanted to find out when the committee meetings were meeting on the various levels, I could go to the Department of Education website? Would I be able to find that information?

Ms. Johnson: So when –, when we get closer to the meeting –, on that first link you'll see that we'll have the agenda for the meeting posted. It'll be there. We've been –.



Rep. Freiberg: So that's just –, the steering meetings are the only ones where public comes?

Ms. Johnson: But –, yeah, those are the only meetings that we are having. All of the other, uh, actual drafting of the standards is having –, is happening asynchronously . . .

Rep. Freiberg: Okay.

Ms. Johnson: . . . because we started the work before we could gather groups of folks together. And they're actually doing the work and really, like, in sets of two or three because they're just, like, sitting hours just writing through standards. We also post on the BESE page when the meetings are going to happen. The steering committee is also –, it's available there.

Rep. Freiberg: And the review of the standards will come at the end through the BESE Notice of Intent or will there be opportunity before that time?

Ms. Johnson: There will be opportunity before that time. I think I have that. I do not have that here, but I –, I do. Uh, so they'll be posted in August for public comment. It's the next step of the process –, the process. And that be will posted on that link that's on the last slide.

Rep. Freiberg: Okay. I'm hoping that you will make it real obvious and real clear because you probably know we had some interesting discussions in House Education last week about social studies curriculum so –, uh, and standards. So, uh, there was a lot of interest shown and I want people to be able to find, uh, those meetings and that information as easily as possible.

Ms. Johnson: If you'd like, if you'll e-mail me, as soon as we post them I can personally e-mail you and let you know they are up.

Judge Manning: Perhaps –.

Rep. Freiberg: Well, they won't –, they won't necessarily be calling me and asking for that information, but I –, I want them –, if they go to the Department of Ed's website to be able to find it easily.

Judge Manning: Also it would be beneficial if you could provide that information to Ms. Cotogno so she could put it on our Civic Education event calendar so that people could also refer to the calendar and see. But as a follow up to what Representative Freiberg had said, so there's only one more public hearing of the steering committee before August? Correct?

Ms. Johnson: Yes.

Judge Manning: So altogether there –, there will have been two public meetings, uh, or –, or two meetings of the steering committee?

Ms. Chaisson: So, all right –, no. There will be one on June 26<sup>th</sup> and another July 21<sup>st</sup>. So, yeah.

Ms. Johnson: Oh, that's before August. Thank you. Yes.

Ms. Chaisson: Yeah, so July 21<sup>st</sup> is the third steering committee meeting.

Judge Manning: Okay. Thank you. But the work groups have not been open to the public?

Ms. Johnson: Yes, they haven't been formally meeting today. They've just been working asynchronously.

Judge Manning: Okay. All right. Ms. Davis.

Ms. Davis: I wanted to say to Ms. Freigberg this is also shot out –, we shoot this out during the –, uh, on –, on the BESE listserv. So if you've signed up for the BESE listserv, that agenda will be posted usually about seven to ten days ahead of time. And I wanted to assure –, what the name? Mr. –? I'm sorry.

Judge Manning: Mr. Bernard.

Ms. Davis: Mr. Bernard that Mr. Castille, Ms. Kira Orange Jones and Ms. Ellis on the board are really, uh, that –, they've –, they've dived deeply into this work and they are wanting to ensure the things that you mentioned. So you –, if you, you know would like to reach out to them as well you could e-mail them, but they are really monitoring diversity and as –, from the selection of the members to the standards themselves.

Judge Manning: Mr. Erwin.

Mr. Erwin: Yeah, and I just wanted to sure too –, when we did the other standards like in ELA in math there was a period where public comment was available on line?

Ms. Johnson: Um, hmm.

Mr. Erwin: That's probably –, is that going to be available again this time?

Ms. Johnson: Yes. That's that August date, ah, I'm sorry, I thought you could still see my PowerPoint. I –, like, changed it. Show ya'll what I was talking about before. Uh, yes, that will happen in August. They'll be posted and by standard by standard . . . .

Mr. Erwin: Correct.

Ms. Johnson: . . . so if someone wanted to they could submit a comment for every single standard.

Mr. Erwin: Right. So, I mean, given that way it was in the past it is a pretty extensive availability for public comment during that period even if they can't come to one of the meetings.

Ms. Johnson: That' exactly right.

Judge Manning: Any other questions or comments? All right. Hearing none then –. Thank you both for being here and I look forward to receiving the PowerPoint slides. I know that you're going to make them available. Mr. Gremillion, he'll make them available to staff so they can be sent to all commission members.

Ms. Johnson: Perfect. Thank ya'll. Have a good weekend.

Judge Manning: And also would each of you please make sure you complete one of the white comment cards, uh. Thank you.

**WITNESSES PRESENT:**

**Information Only:**

Samantha Chaisson, LDOE, Baton Rouge, LA  
Chanda Johnson, LDOE, Greenwell Springs, LA

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

Judge Manning: Uh, Ms. Waldrop also wanted me to remind all commission members, your organizations will be contacted within the next couple of months so that you can begin your submission for our Annual Report. Each year by statute, we are mandated to submit an, uh, end of the year report of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education and our work. So we'll be asking each of you to submit that. It will probably be in August, correct?

There were no other matters that came before the commission.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

Any other business to come before the commission? Hearing none, the chair will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Davis: So moved.

Judge Manning: It's been properly moved by Ms. Davis. Any second?

Mr. Erwin: Second.

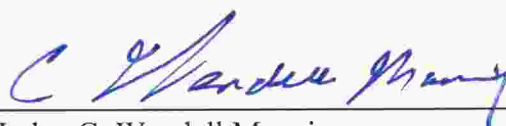
Judge Manning: Seconded by Mr. Erwin. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Commission Members: Aye.

Judge Manning: Any objection? Hearing none, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you all for being here.

There being no further business before the commission, Ms. Davis moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judge C. Wendell Manning  
Chairman

November 12, 2021  
Approval Date