

Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

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MINUTES

November 12, 2013

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Tuesday, November 12, 2013 in the John J. Hainkel Jr. Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairwoman, Beth Courtney called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Beth Courtney
John Alexander
Tamara Heidenthal (designee for Sen. Appel)
Nancy Beben
Peggy Cotogno
Barry Erwin
Janet Pace (designee for Richard Hartley)
Brenda Hodge
Nathan James
Polly Johnson
Judge Wendell Manning
Pamela Mitchell-Wagner
Lawrence Narcisse

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Yvonne Dorsey-Colomb
Fredell Butler
Rep. Steve Carter
Julie Cherry
Ashley Herad
Carolyn Hill
Rep. Patrick Jefferson
Terry Landry

Sanettria "Sam" Pleasant
Judge Karen Roby
Lauren Russell
Robert Travis Scott
Anita Sexton

STAFF PRESENT

Ann Brown, LYAC Coordinator
Tammy Crain-Waldrop, Researcher
Nanette Longuepee, Administrative Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Alexander made a motion to approve the minutes of May 10, 2013, and without objection, the minutes were approved.

IV. BUSINESS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

Beth Courtney opened the meeting and roll was called. Ms. Courtney introduced the new members of the committee. The first item of business was the approval of the annual report. Ms. Courtney stated that the report is an interesting compilation of some of the activities that we have been doing over this period of time.

Judge Wendell Manning made a motion to adopt the annual report, Judge Karen Roby seconded the motion, and without objection the report was adopted.

Jerry Guillot, co-chair of the Louisiana World Peace Coalition, spoke on the World Peace Day event that was held on September 29th at the state capitol. There were a number of things happening at this event. The ceremony was dedicated to the leader who developed the world peace day committee here in Louisiana. It also included a mini concert on waging peace that was sponsored by the Interfaith Federation. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council has been very effective in the world peace day event. LYAC helps provide the numerous art work, poems, essays, and projects that are displayed in the rotunda for the event and remain through the month of October. Ms. Brown will talk about it in more detail.

Ms. Ann Brown, the new coordinator for LYAC and Mr. Robert Lancon, one of the Senior Advisors for LYAC presented a power point presentation updating the Commission on the activities and initiatives that LYAC has been participating in since July, 2013 as well as the achievements of the alumni of LYAC.

Beth Courtney reminded the committee that the Civic Education Commission is the one who

oversees and selects the youth that participate in LYAC. The youth opinion has definitely been a wonderful addition to LPB's "Public Square".

Jerry Guillot informed the committee that the Louisiana City Attorney's Association helps to fund the Legislative Youth Advisory Council's meetings and events.

Beth Courtney invited Nancy Beben to talk about Common Core.

Nancy Beben with the Department of Education. Presented the committee with a power point presentation on Common Core. We had a request from several members of the committee for more information concerning how common core state standards affects social studies since this is the Civic Education Commission. So I will explain a little bit about that. In the common core english language arts standards there are standards for literacy for history, social studies, science and technical subjects. Common core state standards describe reading, writing, and math skills that students should master in grades K-12. The common core standards were adopted by BESE in 2010. They are being fully implemented this year and will be fully assessed next year. These standards are based on the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards. These are not content standards, they are literacy and writing standards. The Standards for Literacy provide guidance for teachers in determining the level of rigor and analysis they should expect from their students. The Standards for Literacy will provide guidance for the level of rigor expected on classroom and state assessments. The Louisiana Department of Education will be providing resources to assist science and social studies teachers.

Brenda Hodge asked if the graduation requirements would be changed to match TOPS requirements within the common core standards. Ms. Beben answered that the standards do not effect the courses that are taught. It will be up to the state to change any courses required for graduation. I know that there was a bill last year that aligns TOPS requirements with graduation requirements.

Lawrence Narcisse commented that he was a teacher for years and he is glad that he is not one today. Teachers are given all this new material and standards to follow and they are not being properly trained to handle these requirements.

Tracy Dahmer with the Attorney General's Office. Spoke about the domestic violence law enforcement training that the department handles. Probably about 90% of domestic violence cases in this state involve children witnessing this violence. We know that when children witness violence in their homes it will obviously affect them in other areas, such as school, socially, mentally, etc. We conduct a two day law enforcement training where we go regionally around the state and teach law enforcement to more appropriately and more effectively deal with those cases when they respond to calls for service. In that program we also teach them how to talk to youth as well as assess for different services. Next is teen dating violence in Louisiana. We are also working very closely with school systems and other non-profit agencies in doing education in the community on teen dating violence. The statistics have shown in the

past few years that one in five teenagers are being abused by someone who is a dating partner. We are working to be more proactive as well as preventative with teens in the state.

Tracy Dahmer handed out packets containing information on a new program that the department has developed. We have actually trade-marked the "Know More" Logo. This package is designed to be a series of educational materials that we will be handing out throughout the state. This is an incomplete package, we are still working on the rest of the topics to be included. On the area of Civic Education, there is a booklet in the package called Know More About the Law which was a project that was designed by the Attorney General's office several years ago. We have updated and enhanced it to be more kid friendly. It was originally designed as a 9 week course that teachers teaching civics or social studies would teach the students. In 2014, we will be taking this entire book and modifying it to create youth friendly dialogue and making it into an online training initiative. It will be the first of its kind in Louisiana. We will probably begin with 3 or 4 schools taking the online course. Ultimately we would like to do this statewide, but I don't think we have the bandwidth to handle it.

Beth Courtney invited Tracy Dahmer to come out and visit LPB. We do this all the time with virtually every school in the state and we can tell you who can pick up the broadband and who can't. We also have a big video series that was produced with the Louisiana State Bar Association that might fit in with this.

Lauren Russell with the House Legislators Back to School Program. The program is going well. There has been a lot more attendance in the schools by the Representatives. Last month I attended the LINC'S conference in Washington, DC and we had several back to school coordinators from different states get together and talk about their strategies for getting legislators to participate. We are working to get materials to the schools and the legislators to educate them on what the program is about. This will hopefully encourage the principals of the schools to call the legislator to request that they come to their schools.

Brenda Hodge stated that she just recently took over the program so the Senate is getting a late start, but we are determined to get each senator into at least one school before the school year is over. Ms. Hodge gave a background on how the Legislators Back to School Program started. We have experienced some difficulty with term limits in getting legislators involved and impassioned about the program. But once they do it they will do it again. It is a win - win for everybody. LYAC has this as one of their initiatives to invite the legislators to their schools.

Beth Courtney informed the committee that she received information on Ken Burns' Gettysburg Address. His special this year is about a school in Vermont where they have some special students and every year they all learn the Gettysburg Address and recite it. There is an initiative going on now, it is the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address coming up in November. We are trying to get around the country, primarily school children, to video tape themselves reciting the Gettysburg Address. I will apply for grant money to fund the effort. There are already many public officials and celebrities participating. Asked if the Commission thought it would be appropriate for the Commission to be involved in.

Beth Courtney would like to discuss in the future that Louisiana has the lowest number of women in politics. Why is that? Maybe there is a role we can play in this.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Peggy Cotogno moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Courtney, Chairwoman

Approved: 05/16/14