

LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

Address:

Post Office Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-9818

URL: <http://civiced.louisiana.gov>



Committee Staff:

Tammy Crain-Waldrop
Researcher

Candace Shields
Secretary

Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

APPROVED MINUTES

May 18, 2018

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 18, 2018 in the John J. Hainkel Jr. Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairperson, Beth Courtney called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Beth Courtney, Chairperson
Fredell Butler
Will Chapman
Peggy Cotogno
Rep. Rick Edmonds
Ryan Gremillion
Mitzi Hochheiser
Polly Johnson
Judge Wendell Manning
Josh McNemar
Sen. Blade Morrish
Lawrence Narcisse
Lauren Russell
Monica Taylor
Donald Songy

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sen. Yvonne Dorsey, Vice Chairperson
John Alexander
Shan Davis
Barry Erwin
Doris Hicks
Brenda Hodge
Rep. Patrick Jefferson
Terry Landry
Kelly Pepper
Criketa Matlock
Anita Sexton

STAFF PRESENT

Tammy Crain-Waldrop, Researcher
Candace Shields, Secretary

III. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Ms. Courtney introduced Mr. Will Chapman with the Louisiana Press Association.

Mr. Chapman stated he recently took over as director of the Louisiana Press Association. He said he is a third generation newspaper publisher in Louisiana. He stated he retired as the publisher of a newspaper in New Iberia over a year ago.

Ms. Courtney introduced Ms. Mitzi Hochheiser with Volunteer Louisiana.

Ms. Hochheiser stated she was recently elected the chairman of Volunteer Louisiana Commission in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. She stated she is a Medicaid Systems Director at the State of Louisiana. She said she previously worked at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Health System.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rep. Edmonds made a motion to approve the minutes of November 9, 2017. There being no objection, the minutes were approved.

V. VOTE

Judge Manning stated there were over one hundred applicants. He said according to by-laws, the numbers must be limited to certain congressional districts and other at-large members. He read the recommendations from the review commission for the 2018-2019 Legislative Youth Advisory Council as:

Congressional District 1

Camden Dyer	Lusher Charter High School
Andrew Gary	St. Martin's Episcopal School
Anjali Pellegrin	Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies

Congressional District 2

Caroline Benoit	Louise S. McGehee School
Blake Brooks	Benjamin Franklin High School
Breanne Mitchell	St. Mary's Dominican High School

Congressional District 3

Amy Lemaire	Iota High School
Hannah Michel	Lafayette High School
Jeff Pham	Lafayette High School

Congressional District 4

Hannah Berry	C.E. Byrd High School
Robert Lawrence	C.E. Byrd High School
Veronica Penales	Caddo Parish Magnet High School

Congressional District 5

Isabella Bolayon	Neville High School
Landry Higgins	West Feliciana High School
Laura Peters	Jena High School

Congressional District 6

Spencer Heitman	Catholic High School
Selia Jindal	Baton Rouge Magnet High School
Alexandra Thibodeaux	St. Joseph's Academy

At-Large Members

Stephen Adjei	LSU Laboratory School
Bobby Alexander	Airline High School

Annie Blanchard	St. Joseph's Academy
Nydia Cooper	Ascension Catholic High School
Madelyn Cutrone	Cutrone Academy
Sophie Faircloth	Denham Springs High School
Gabrielle Fontenot	Sacred Heart High School
Caitlyn Foret	Walker High School
Torri Jackson	Dutchtown High School
Madeline Malbrough	Houma Christian School
Emily Nichols	Port Allen High School
John Garrett Patrick	Concordia Parish Academy
Hrilina Ramrakhiani	Summer Stone Academy
Eugenia Williams	Westminister Christian Academy

Judge Manning made a motion to approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2018-2019 membership on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. There being no objection, the recommendations were approved.

Representative Edmonds took a point of personal privilege to state that he would be leaving the commission meeting due to this day being the last day of session and he has been called back in. He stated this meeting room houses some of the most important committee meetings. He said he has been in the room several times with health and welfare issues and education issues. He stated he is grateful for students who are high achievers. He said his mother taught him the value of reading, spelling and math facts. He stated he hopes that the students do not take for granted the teachers who invested in them. He said he remembers when he was fifteen walking into the House of Representatives and thinking what a privilege it would be. He stated later in life, he is serving House District 66 and serving on this commission. He said students may not know where they were going in life but know that there is a certain way that God and people who invest in them see greatness in them. He stated with the abilities that they are blessed with, they could become or do anything. He said many at the commission table would say that is the truth of their lives – that somebody loved them, somebody prayed for them and somebody helped them to get an education, and here they are giving back and serving.

VI. UPDATES

A. Back to School:

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Lauren Russell, representing the House Communications Office Back to School Program.

Ms. Russell stated Morgan Robertson could not be here for the Senate which had fifteen members make Back to School visits this year. She said the House had forty-five which is more than they had before. She stated at the last commission meeting, it was discussed how a more aggressive approach would be taken to get information to the representatives and senators to encourage them to go which seemed to be working because of the rise in participation.

WITNESSES PRESENT:

Information Only:

Lauren Russell, House Back to School Program, Baton Rouge, LA

B. LYAC:

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Megan Bella, representing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Ms. Bella stated there were many good applications this year and that anyone who did not get on the council could reapply if they are still eligible next year.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Marian Luzier, representing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Miss Luzier stated she is the president. She said one of her favorite things she did on LYAC was LPB. She stated the most recent one was about school safety with Sheriff Jason Ard and someone with the State Board of Education and she really enjoyed that discussion. She said LYAC has had a really good year, and she has been on it for three years. She stated her committee shares pictures to show what they are doing at their school and also shares ideas on teamwork.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Jesse Landry, representing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Mr. Landry stated he found his experiences with LYAC this year to be incredibly enriching. He said he worked with many gifted students from across the state, and he was able to affect real change in the state which was a new experience. He stated he attended a highschool in a rural parish. He said it was his experiences there that showed him that for students who are trying to take enrollment classes, it can be very difficult with regard to the costs which are prohibitive. He stated the benefits that can be reaped from these classes are simply too great to not be available to everyone else. He said he brought these concerns before LYAC with the help of his fellow members, Ms. Megan Bella and Senator Mike Walsworth. He stated they were able to create a resolution to evaluate the dual enrollment program in the state. He said he found meetings were

more productive and informative. He stated he was introduced to many new ideas as he was shown the sheer magnitude of the institutions by which the government works, and he was shown the nuances and value of group participation and cooperation. He said it renewed his faith in civic activism. He stated he would encourage anyone to apply. He said it was a wonderful learning experience.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Reed Broussard, representing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Mr. Broussard stated the meetings were very informative. He said it was great getting together with some of the most intellectual people their age around the state to see what they could come up with and share ideas during the meetings. He stated they had speakers from the House and the Senate – Representative Ted James, Senator Barrow and Representative Emerson. He stated they were able to hear from people in government and discuss ideas. He said they meet people through the youth summit. He stated it was great to have conversations because communication skills will help them in the future.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Ruby Roberg, representing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Miss Roberg stated not only is LYAC a group of diverse, civically engaged, intelligent friends, but they also reach out to their peers back home to encourage them to become civically engaged and aware of what is going on. She said they had a youth summit March 3rd where each member brought a friend. She stated a lot of them came back wanting to get involved. She said at her school, with the help of Ms. Bella, she helped organize a voter registration day for her senior class and registered over a quarter of her class. She stated this organization is helping them to better themselves and their peers.

WITNESSES PRESENT:

Information Only:

Megan Bella, LYAC, Coordinator, Baton Rouge, LA
Reed Broussard, LYAC, Youngsville, LA
Jesse Landry, LYAC, St. Francisville, LA
Marian Luzier, LYAC, Walker, LA
Ruby Roberg, LYAC, St. Francisville, LA

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

Ms. Courtney stated Judge Manning and Peggy Cotogno will provide an update on ACE.

Judge Manning said for a number of years, the Louisiana District Judges Association and the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education have worked collaboratively with the program "Judges in the Classroom, Lawyers in the Classroom". He stated the program developed a series of source materials, lesson plans and interactive programs that were taken into schools throughout the state working with young people and educating them in the areas of civics and law-related education. He said the program is being taken to the next level, but it was realized that the adult citizens need refresher courses. He stated the basic things learned in civics and American history tend to be forgotten as one grows older so the Adult Civic Education (ACE) program was developed. He said it is modeled after a program that was adopted in Florida by the Florida State Bar and the Florida State Judiciary. He stated in the ACE program, ten sets of lesson plans and interactive programming were developed that volunteer judges and lawyers throughout the state take into civic organizations, community organizations, senior centers, churches and synagogues throughout the state to offer adult citizens an opportunity to become ingrained more in the knowledge of basic constitutional principles and rights – the foundation of government. He said it began in January at the mid-year State Bar Association's meeting with their first training and are continuing to offer the training to judges and lawyers throughout the state.

Ms. Cotogno stated it was her job to get presentations to the civic organizations. She said they are not having any problems getting speakers. She stated she is in the beginning stages of developing a database for organizations that might be interested in receiving a presentation. She requested that if anyone knows of any organization that is interested in receiving a presentation, she would appreciate their help. She said it does not do any good to have speakers if there is no where to send them. Ms. Cotogno requested that Ms. Tammy Waldrop-Crain provide e-mail addresses of the commission members so she could send information.

Ms. Courtney stated the commission could begin compiling a list of all appropriate civic organizations that may want a speaker on these topics. She said after reading all of the LYAC applications, it made her realize the renewed importance of what they are doing. She stated today there was another tragedy at a school in Texas. She said students worry about the safety of their schools. She stated this commission is important and everyone serving on it has an important role to play for the future. She said if anyone would like to step up for leadership, there will be an election in the fall. She stated some people have submitted LYAC applications numerous times, but she hoped they will apply again. She said LPB works on a project called "Young Heros" which is a statewide program. She said as she read the LYAC applications, she thought there were a number of people who should be a part of the pool for the Young Heros Program. She stated next year, the Young Heros Program will have a scholarship as well.

Mr. Butler was concerned if there was any benefit in bringing more awareness about LYAC by the commission members going into the schools of applicants who were not accepted and

acknowledge their effort and willingness to support becoming more civically engaged to bring attention to those individuals as well as expand interest within the student body. He stated he suspects that there are many schools where there is very little awareness of the opportunity.

Ms. Courtney stated the commission could do a certificate, but it has a very small budget. She said there were over one hundred applications and each applicant had two letters of recommendation from teachers or advisors.

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the commission providing a certificate of acknowledgment to student LYAC applicants for their effort and willingness to support becoming more civically engaged. There being no objection, the motion passed.

Ms. Courtney requested that Ms. Bella answer for the commission if there were more applicants this year than in the past.

Ms. Bella stated this was her second year. She said from what she has heard from people she had talked to there were more applications this year than in the past.

Ms. Courtney said that is encouraging because that says young people want to be involved in civic activities and have not given up on the concept of democracy and civic engagement.

Senator Morrish stated he was glad he had an opportunity to attend for a few minutes. He said he appreciates the time that has been spent on this issue. He stated it is really important as this moves forward and he is excited to see so many applications.

There were no other matters that came before the commission.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the commission, Mr. Butler moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Beth Courtney, Chairperson

November 2, 2018
Approval Date