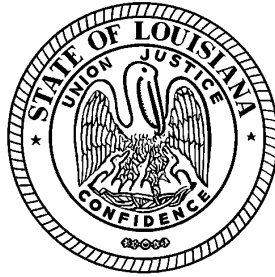


# Louisiana Commission on Civic Education



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## MINUTES

November 14, 2014

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, November 14, 2014 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 2:04 p.m.

### II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

Beth Courtney (Chair)  
John Alexander  
Sen. Conrad Appel (proxy - Tamara Heidenthal)  
Nancy Beben  
Fredell Butler  
Peggy Cotogno  
Barry Erwin  
Richard Hartley  
Brenda Hodge  
Nathan James  
Polly Johnson  
Judge Wendell Manning  
Criketa Matlock  
Pamela Mitchell-Wagner  
Lawrence Narcisse  
Sanettria "Sam" Pleasant  
Judge Karen Roby  
Anita Sexton

#### MEMBERS ABSENT

Sen. Yovvne Dorsey-Colomb (Vice-Ch)  
Rep. Steve Carter  
Julie Cherry  
Carolyn Hill  
Rep. Patrick Jefferson  
Terry Landry  
Kelly Pepper  
Lauren Russell

STAFF PRESENT

Tammy Crain-Waldrop, Researcher

Nanette Normand, Administrative Secretary

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Nathan James made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2014 meeting, and there being no objection, the minutes were approved.

**IV. BUSINESS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

Judge Wendell Manning spoke to the commission on behalf of the Louisiana District Judges Association where he serves as secretary and chair of the Judges Committee on Civics and Law Related Education. LA District Judges Association is the professional organization which supports the work of your district judges throughout the state. The mission of the LA District Judges Association is to improve the administration of justice, support our members through continuing education, and to provide the greatest access to fair, just and responsive trial courts. Thomas Jefferson noted that a nation's best defense is an educated citizenry. As you study the writings of Jefferson and our founding fathers you quickly see that they were not just concerned with the basics of education, but focused on the fact that citizens must hold a basic knowledge and understanding of our constitutional form of government, the limits on government's power, the checks and balances, the rights and responsibilities of the people, respect for the rule of law and due process and equal justice under the law. The LA District Judges Association has long supported the educational endeavors to teach these principles and instill these principles in the young people throughout our state.

The programs I would like to highlight for you today are first, the Judges Committee on Civic and Law Related Education. In the year 2000, this committee developed its signature program known as Judges in the Classroom. This program pairs judges with elementary, middle, and high school classes throughout the state. Volunteer judges come into the classroom and offer topical instruction as well as hands on real life experiences from their court. This committee also developed and maintained resources including lesson plans for judges in conjunction with teachers which they can use throughout the year. With the help of Peggy Cotogno with the LA Center for Law & Civic Education the judges in the classroom has been able to expand and improve its services.

Beth Courtney moved to the Approval of the Annual Report by asking if anyone had any changes or additions to be made to the report. Judge Manning made a motion to approve the report with a second by Mr. Nathan James. The 2013/2014 Annual Report was approved without objection.

Suzy Johnson presented the U.S. Student of the Year program to the commission. The program is called the United States Senate Youth Program and has been in existence since 1962 and last year we conducted our final stage of the selection process. We select 2 delegates from Louisiana

and 2 alternates. Most students apply for this program because of their leadership, but it is also a wonderful scholarship opportunity. This year we had 45 applicants. The delegates are required to attend one week in March. There are 104 delegates and the program is fully funded by the Hearst Foundation. The delegates can be either a junior or senior and they must currently serve as an elected officer. These students meet with Supreme Court Justices, people from the Department of Defense, they have a session with the President, they meet with their congressional delegates. It is learning more of the inner workings of the congressional processes. Students submit an application portfolio that is judged on their leadership, volunteer and academic success. The applicants then have to take a very strenuous exam and are then interviewed by a panel of judges chosen from the business community. The scores are tallied and from there our 2 delegates will be chosen. Patrick Flanigan, last year's LYAC president, was chosen to present the closing address to the delegates on the final day in Washington.

Jessica Raymond presented the Students Against Destructive Decisions Organization along with a group of students from Denham Springs High School. Our club has been a part of Denham Springs High School for about 27 years. One of the highlights of the club is the annual fashion/talent show that is done each year in honor of a high school student who was killed in an automobile accident years ago. It is a great opportunity to remind students and members of the community that you can have a good time without drinking and driving. Several students from Denham Springs high presented different programs and activities they hold throughout the school year to enforce the idea of staying away from harmful things such as drugs and alcohol.

Dylan Ivy is the Louisiana state contact person with SADD National and spoke out for all the schools in Louisiana who need support, instruction, or materials for their SADD chapter. Denham Springs SADD chapter is the group you just heard from and they are a very successful chapter. They have won every national award there is.

Richard Hartley from the Lieutenant Governor's Office. The Lieutenant Governor is very education minded and I would like to go over a few things we have been working on. We are in the middle of releasing a brand new curriculum called the Battle of New Orleans. All schools in the state are getting copies of the curriculum whether it is public, private, or home school. The 200 anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans will be on January 8, 2015. There will be numerous events being held in honor of the battle.

Poverty Point in West Carroll Parish was just inscribed as the 22<sup>nd</sup> world heritage site in the U.S. This puts Poverty Point on par with sites like the Statute of Liberty and the Grand Canyon. This is the oldest settlement in the New World. We are creating some educational pieces on this topic.

We also have a wonderful new exhibit over at the State Park Museum called Revolution, The Atlantic World Reborn. It traces the history of the American Revolution and the French Revolution.

Beth Courtney explained the American Graduate Program. The project is called the American Graduate and was started by General Colin Powell many years ago. This program is about keeping young people in school. LPB will be tracing this project for the next two years, we will be looking for champions to profile, champion individuals who work with young people, and

with young people who are stellar examples. This will start off with a special Public Square this month.

Wallace Myers, president of LYAC and D'Wayne Bell gave an update on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council's activities as well as the success of World Peace Day. Mr. Myers told the commission about the success of the two day seminar that was held for new members this summer. The topic the council would like to pursue for this term is allowing student representation on local school boards in an advisory, non-voting capacity. Mr. Bell gave an update on the importance of youth participating in the taping of LPB's Public Square. Mr. Myers and Mr. Bell gave an accounting of the World Peace Day event and LYAC's involvement in it. In the coming months LYAC will be meeting with numerous senators, representatives, and other public officials in order to gather information to help with their goal of student representation on school boards.

Morgan Blanchard with Legislators Back to School Program for the Senate updated the commission on the program. Lauren Russell who is the counterpart in the House could not be here today. Last year we had 16 senators participate in the Back to School Program teaching at 24 different schools. So far this year, we already have about 10 senators and they have visited over 12 schools and many others have committed their time for later in the year. So we are already on track to beat last year's numbers. In order to get these numbers up at the beginning of the school year, both Lauren and I sent out a really large packet of sample materials as well as ideas for the classroom visit to all the legislators district offices. The new trend this year is for legislator's to visit career days. It is a little bit different than the traditional back to school setting because they are actually speaking to the students one on one instead of a classroom at a time. We are looking forward to seeing what comes out of the program this year.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, Barry Erwin moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Beth Courtney, Chairwoman

Approved: May 22, 2015