

# The *LPAE* Link

The Official Newsletter of the Lafayette Parish Association of Educators

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## Changes Coming to LPSS 403b Accounts

Employees who participate in the supplemental 403b retirement savings programs offered through payroll deduction in LPSS payroll can expect major changes in the coming year as the district transitions to one provider. Prior to a board vote at its 9/14/16 meeting, employees electing to have funds withheld from their paychecks could invest their money with several different investment advisors. School Board Member Jeremy Hidalgo and Director of Finance Matt Dugas both led the charge to consolidate to one district provider citing increased financial liability for the district should financial issues arise. Dugas said that, bringing the program under one platform will lower the fees charged to the employees for maintaining the plan and allow the district, with advice from an investment advisor, to vet the products offered to employees and make sure the investment options are of value. In a 7-1 vote the board approved Cornerstone Financial Group as the district's financial advisor.

### What is a 403b?

403b accounts are the “non-profit” counterpart to 401k retirement accounts. Employees elect to use some of their paycheck to invest for supplemental income at retirement. Contributions are made before income tax is paid and allowed to grow tax-deferred until the money is taxed as income when withdrawn from the plan.

### What does this mean for you?

According to financial reports only about 700 of the 4,000 employees in the district elect to participate in a 403b. If you currently have a 403b account you will be afforded the opportunity to roll over your account from your current advisor to Cornerstone Financial Group. If you elect to retain your current advisor, you will not be able to use payroll deduction- your contributions must be made through other arrangements, such as a bank draft, instead.

### What is Cornerstone Financial Group, and how were they selected to manage my money?

Earlier this year the LPSS Board issued a call for bids using the standard RFP process. Cornerstone Financial, based in Lafayette, was one of several financial advisors to submit bids for consideration. Cornerstone Financial is no stranger to LPSS as they provide financial advice concerning bond investments to the district.

### Will my pension be impacted?

403b retirement accounts are voluntary investments made by individuals for the purposes of supplementing retirement pensions, insurance, and savings accounts, and are NOT directly impacted by this change. Pensions are managed by state retirement boards and are referred to as a “defined benefit plan”.

### Want to know more?

As an educator, you face unique retirement planning challenges. Learn what you need to do to make it to the finish line and how NEA Member Benefits can help you through any rough spots.

<https://www.neamb.com/retirement-center.htm>

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# Are you...

- ...wondering how to deal with disruptive student behavior?
- ...curious how to deal with difficult parents?
- ...looking for classroom rules and routines that will work for you?



**The Louisiana Association of Educators has the help you need!**

**Early Career Success Strategies** is an all-day workshop that gives new or “nearly-new” teachers and paraprofessionals the pieces of the puzzle they need for success in the classroom. Participants receive tools to provide students with a classroom atmosphere that is optimum for learning. Lunch, snacks and a binder of practical strategies, tips and resources are provided to participants that they can begin using immediately in their professional settings. All materials and lunch are included.

## Program Topics

- ✿ Getting to Know Your Students
- ✿ Rules and Routines
- ✿ Reinforcements
- ✿ Polishing Your Techniques
- ✿ Smoothly Flowing Classrooms
- ✿ Communications Styles
- ✿ Home and School Communication
- ✿ Dealing with Difficult Behaviors



**Scheduled workshop:**  
**Saturday, October 1, 2016**  
**10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.**

**Lafayette South Regional Library**  
**6101 Johnston St.**  
**Lafayette, LA 70503**

***To register:***

*Email: [glampe@lae.org](mailto:glampe@lae.org)*

*Text: 225-636-0868*

## Blue Ribbon Committee Recommends 2002 Sales Tax Excess Distribution

In a surprise move, CFO Billy Guidry and staff authorized the Blue Ribbon Committee to approve recommending to the board the "Declaration of Excess Distribution" based on the calculation presented by administration. If approved by the LPSS Board at its regular meeting in October, qualifying employees can expect to see a gross distribution of \$1388.73.

The LPSS Finance Committee deferred a proposed reinstatement of employee step and pay for performance salary increases at its 9/6/16 meeting. In addition, the committee elected to defer a proposal to index administrator salaries to the LPSS teacher salary schedule. Committee Chairperson Justin Centanni suggested revisiting the issue when LPSS begins the budgeting process in January.

## **LPAE Executive Board Meets With Human Resources and Dr. Aguiard Concerning Transfer Policy**

LPAE Executive Board members met with Suzanne Thibodeaux from LPSS Human Resources to discuss proposed changes to the district transfer policy. As of now, the voluntary transfer policy makes use of an employee's COMPASS evaluation score to determine transfers. Under a new proposal, LPSS would return to an earlier method of determining transfers using a combination of seniority, administrator recommendations, and overall performance. Additional components of the policy include lowering the required number of years of service at a school for a voluntary transfer from three to two.

Part of the reason for the proposed changes includes improving the hiring process for the new Southside High School set to begin in January. Thibodeaux also suggested that language in the policy was out of date and proved to be an obstacle to efficiently staff schools across the district.

LPAE believes that a thorough conversation needs to be held with regard to the proposed policy changes and has requested a meeting with Dr. Aguiard to further develop a fully transparent transfer policy.

### **LPAE Proposed Transfer Policy**

Transfers- March 1-April 30-Every open position will be advertised on the LPSS website for a minimum of 8 days prior to the interview process and made available to current LPSS employees only. Interviews will be conducted during this period. Principals may decide to accept no applicants and maintain the position open. Teachers will be eligible for transfer after **one** complete year in our school system. The transfer will not be blocked. Employees will not complete a transfer request until a position is offered and accepted.

Transfers and General Hiring- May 1-July 31- Every open position will be advertised on the LPSS website for a minimum of 8 days prior to the interview process and be open to any prospective employee in or out of district. Current employee transfers will not be blocked. Current employees will not complete a transfer request until a position is offered and accepted.

Late Hires- From July 31 to the end of the school year, the Superintendent and/or principal must approve the transfer. Any positions filled after July 31 will be automatically open the following spring and made available for current employees to apply. Employees will be informed that this is potentially a one-year only position. (end- of-year hire). Principals may choose to rehire end-of-year hire employee.

#### Other Guidelines:

- Interviewees will be selected from those who apply during the advertised period.
- If more than 3 applicants apply for a position, principals will select a minimum of 3 to interview.
- Principals will have autonomy to hire the candidate of their choice.
- Employees will be allowed to interview for any open position, at any time according to the deadlines and restrictions listed above.

### **NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988.

The day of September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence of several Latin American countries. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

<http://www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov/about/>

**The LPAE Link it the official publication of the Lafayette Parish Association of Educators**  
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Visit [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) to discover all the ways that it pays to be a member of LPAE.

- ✓ Travel Discounts
- ✓ Auto Buying Program
- ✓ Retirement Planning
- ✓ Insurance



*Left to right: Jonathan Cole, LPAE President; Nicole Melancon, Ridge Elem. (one of many to receive assistance); Shane Riddle, LAE Legislative and Political Director*

### **Lafayette Members Receive LAE Help**

LPAE members and LAE members from other locals came to the LPAE office to receive gift cards from LAE's Flood Relief Program. The gift cards were distributed to the members by Shane Riddle, LAE Legislative and Political Director.

If you received flood damage to either your home or classroom it is NOT TOO LATE to apply for assistance. Visit the LAE [website \(lae.org\)](http://lae.org) and click on [LAE's Flood Relief Program](#).

It's the LAE's mission to empower educators to be "bold" in standing up for the best interests of their colleagues, their schools, their communities, but most importantly, their students. We are asking LAE members to be B.O.L.D. for the association by making a commitment to stand alongside the LAE in its efforts to:

**BUILD** the association's influence through one-of-a-kind professional development and advocacy initiatives.

**ORGANIZE** public school employees to initiate a movement to strengthen the collective voice of Louisiana's education professionals.

**LEAD** efforts in individual school districts in order to improve local education policies.

**DEMAND** access to better educational experiences for Louisiana's public school students.

Together, we can make a difference in providing every child in Louisiana with the public schools they deserve. Become a partner in our BOLD advocacy for change. Contact your LAE UniServ Director to find out what you can do to get involved in your community.

Region 4 (Evangeline, Lafayette, St. Landry, and Vermilion parishes):

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