

LCE News October 2006

Greetings!

The Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (LCE) in its effort to broaden its outreach has expanded its communication to electronic newsletters. Through this medium, we will update you on LCE programming monthly so that either as a volunteer, teacher, student or supporter you have the opportunity to learn more about the LCE's work across Louisiana.

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OPEN DOORS TO FEDERAL COURTS YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM- November 9, 2006



The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, under the leadership of U.S. Magistrate **Judge Roby**, will host its "Open Doors" program on **Thursday, November 9th, 2006, 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.** in partnership with the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic

Education.

The program is open to High School seniors who attend schools in the 13 Parish area that make up the Eastern District. It provides an extended Civic learning opportunity to Louisiana Students in the area of Civics and Government.

This years program is entitled a **Fair and Impartial Judiciary Partners in Justice: An Independent Judiciary and a Fair-Minded Jury** where students will present a mock argument to a sitting federal judge in the Eastern District. The material for the students has been provided by the Administrative Office of Courts located in Washington D.C. and is derived from a recent U.S. Supreme Court Case to aid in increasing a students understanding of the process that judges undergo in deciding cases.

Due to space constraints, **15 schools** will be able to participate in the program so teachers should sign up their schools early. Lunch will be provided. **Volunteers lawyers** are needed to aid the students and teachers in their preparation and to aid the court on the day of the event to make sure that students get to their courtroom on time. **Lawyer volunteers** may sign up online by clicking on the volunteer

THE CURRENT CONDITION OF CIVIC EDUCATION

There is a **crisis** in American civic education, one that threatens our nation's future democratic leadership. This is the conclusion reached in a report issued by **The Intercollegiate Studies Institute**. The study revealed that colleges and universities are failing to add to their graduate's understanding of our nation's history and important democratic principles and ideals. Without such civic education, the United States will face even greater challenges in the post- 9/11 world. Participants in the study included students attending some of the nation's most expensive and prestigious schools. To **read more** about this report, please see link at the bottom of this article.

Fixing our nation's problems with civic education will require national and state educational efforts. Louisiana's effort to improve civic education is being lead by the **Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (LCE)**

tab and completing the form indicating that they wish to help with the Open Doors to Federal Courts program. **Teachers**, please contact Maria Yiannopoulos at maria@lalce.org or by telephone at (225) 214-5570. **Registration information** for schools is also placed on the web site at www.lalce.org. Spaces fill up fast so sign up now!

[Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education](#)

LCE LEADERSHIP PRESENTS BEFORE BESE BOARD

In celebration of **US Constitution** week, leadership from the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (LCE) **The Honorable Karen Wells Roby**, *United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana*, **Maria Yiannopoulos** *Executive Director of the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education* and **Dr. William Miller** of *Quality Educational Support Services* presented before the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) on Thursday, September 21, 2006.



The presentation focused on the LCE's work in implementing "**We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution**" curriculum across Louisiana's schools. This interactive curriculum engages students in the study of the US Constitution and has students examine its principles of democracy and apply that learning in mock congressional hearings before distinguished members of the community. Judge Roby also presented the LCE's programs and curricula that provide social studies educators with the tools and resources to effectively teach about the rule of law in a democratic society. Lawyers, judges and law enforcement officers are included in this learning process by lending their expertise to the students.

"WE THE PEOPLE" - DISTRICT COORDINATORS NEEDED

The Louisiana "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution" program needs to fill **two part time** positions for district coordinators in **Congressional Districts 4 and 5**. **Congressional District 4** includes: Shreveport, Bossier City, Minden, Natchitoches.

Congressional District 5 includes: Alexandria, Pineville, Ruston, Monroe and Bastrop.



"**We the People**" District Coordinators are responsible for conducting an awareness workshop on the "We the People" program for educators within their purview, as well as assisting schools with organizing mock congressional hearing competitions. Further, each district coordinator is responsible for inviting the participation of legal, civic and elected leaders from their respective Congressional districts to serve as judges during the competitions. This is an excellent opportunity to engage more youth in civic participation and for the community to become involved in the civic education of youth.

Eligible candidates include: Educators and legal professionals who

serving as the public education partner of the Louisiana State Bar Association.

The LCE recently developed the **first-ever** comprehensive report on the condition of civic education in Louisiana's schools. The report is a benchmark for where the state stands in regard to civic education. The report encourages improvements in Louisiana's civic education.

Highlights of the Louisiana report reveals that the State of **Louisiana provides** civics/citizenship education opportunities for **public school** students in kindergarten through high school. **Non-public schools** also **provide** students with civic/citizenship education opportunities within their programs. On the **GEE 21 Spring 2005**, initial high school test takers, the state average correct for civics was 55% out of 19 items. **St. Tammany Parish School System** and the **Zachary Community School System** tied for the highest district average rate (8.9 out of 16) on the Civics Content Standard of the Grade 8, Spring 2005 LEAP test. **Caldwell Parish School System** achieved the highest district average rate (12.1 out of 19) on the Civics Content

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