



Credit: Northshore Charter School

Is it All About the Money?



hard to ignore.

During last week's trial regarding funding for Type 2 charter schools, it became abundantly clear to me that the plaintiffs--the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE) and the Iberville Parish School Board (Iberville)--aren't just challenging how charter schools are funded; they are essentially using this lawsuit as a platform to express their discontent with charter schools in general. While the Court was quick to dismiss most of the plaintiffs' arguments that strayed beyond the legal question at hand--i.e., whether BESE has exceeded its constitutional powers by funding Type 2 charter schools through the MFP--the relentless, misconstrued testimony offered by the plaintiffs' witnesses, including that of Iberville's Superintendent, was

Despite the many great strides and accomplishments charter schools have made in helping educate Louisiana's public school students over the past twenty years, the plaintiffs, as well as other foes of the charter school movement, still question whether charter schools are public schools simply because they operate independently of traditional school boards and don't have elected board members. The notion that being an elected board member somehow makes a person more qualified than a volunteer board member to serve the greater public is baffling and a tiresome argument--especially when many of the public laws that safeguard against misuse of public dollars and abuse of powers, such as Open Meetings Law and the Code of Ethics, apply to charter school and traditional school boards alike. Nevertheless, the plaintiffs' arguments only highlight the long road still ahead of us in terms of educating the public as to what charter schools are and are not.

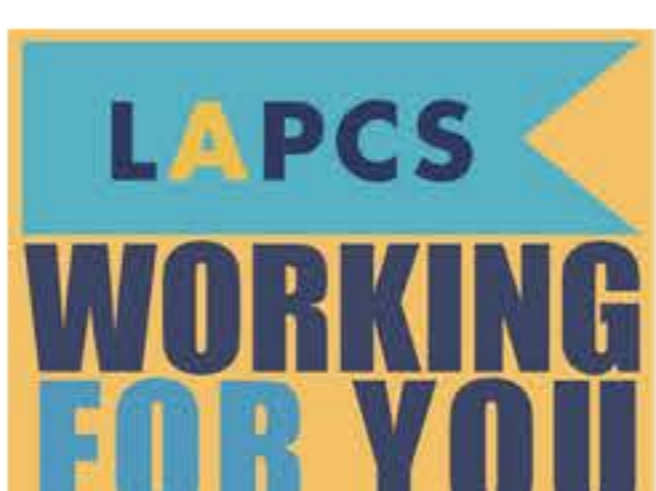
For the complete text of Caroline Roemer Shirley's introduction, [click here](#).

In this month's newsletter:

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LAPCS: Working for You!



March 12: Charter School Legal Handbook CLE. Sponsored by LAPCS and Louisiana Appleseed, this training reviews the new Charter School Legal Handbook for school leaders and attorneys and will be held in Monroe at the Ouachita Parish Library. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

March 14: 9th Annual Charter School Teacher Fair. Sponsored by LAPCS, the East Bank Collaborative of Charter Schools and New School for New Orleans, the Teacher Fair is open to certified teachers (and those working on certification) looking for full and part-time teaching jobs in Louisiana charter schools. For more information, view the [flyer](#). To register, click [here](#).

March 24: Background Checks and Ethics Training Webinar. Sponsored by The Bottom Line and the Department of Education, this webinar will outline the background checks and ethics training process. To register, click [here](#).

March 27-28: Governance Training with Frank Martinelli. Hosted by The Top Shelf and the Greater New Orleans Foundation, nonprofit consultant Frank Martinelli will present four sessions on governance training over a two day period. Each session is free for LAPCS members and \$15 for non-members. For more information and to register, please visit our [calendar](#).

March 28: Baton Rouge School Choice Expo. Sponsored by LAPCS, the East Bank Collaborative of Charter Schools and Louisiana Federation for Children and New Schools for Baton Rouge, this Expo will provide Baton Rouge-area charter and scholarship schools the opportunity to market themselves to potential students and families. To exhibit, please complete this [form](#).

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In the News



- [National charter school enrollment approaches 3 million students](#)
- [School sponsors trip to Selma for 36 students](#)
- [RSD officials announce charters that will move into Wilson and Livingston buildings](#)
- [New Orleans charter school teacher fair set for March 14](#)
- [Letter: Thousands benefit from school choice programs](#)

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Educating Louisiana: New Episodes Airing Now!



The newest episode of *Educating Louisiana*, featuring Rose Petersen of the East Bank Collaborative of Charter Schools and Dean Judith Miranti of Xavier University and BESE, airs this week! New episodes of the show will air on Cox 4 each Thursday night at 7:00 pm (repeating on Monday evenings at 10:30 pm) in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Lafayette and on Northshore Channel 17 on Sundays at 7:00 pm (repeating on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM and Mondays at 4:30 pm). You can always view past episodes on our [Vimeo page](#).

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The Top Shelf: Board Members Behaving Badly



Our Director of Governance Initiatives, Makyah Moody, recently penned an insightful article about five behaviors that can negatively impact your board and inhibit its effectiveness. Read [Stop the Madness: Board Members Behaving Badly](#) and feel free to post your thoughts and comments.

We still need board members to participate in our Board Member Focus series! The series highlights the diverse backgrounds of charter school board members and discusses the important role they play in our schools and communities. You can self-nominate or nominate another board member. Please take a few minutes to read our [submission guidelines](#). If you have any questions, contact [Nikki Chatelain](#).

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The Bottom Line: Charter Funding Lawsuit Update



Last week, a trial was held on the merits regarding Iberville Parish School Board's and the Louisiana Association of Educators' challenge of the state's use of the MFP to fund Type 2 charter schools, as well as the funding formula itself. Upon conclusion of the three-day trial, Judge Wilson Fields asked all parties to submit post-trial briefs on the matter by mid-April and stated that he will issue a ruling by mid-May. For more information, read [this article](#) in *The Advocate*. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact LAPCS' Legal Director [Sarah Vandergriff](#) with any questions or concerns.

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Teacher and Principal of the Year Semi-Finalists



The Department of Education recently announced its semi-finalists for Teacher of the Year and Principal of the Year, including three semi-finalists from charter schools: Collegiate Academies' Evan Staudt for Teacher of the Year and, for Principal of the Year, Algiers Charter School Association's Rene Lewis-Carter and ReNEW Schools' Tim Hearin. The awards will be presented at the 9th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Symposium and Celebration on July 11 in Baton Rouge. Click [here](#) for a complete list of semi-finalists.

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Just the Facts: Negative Effects of Student Hunger



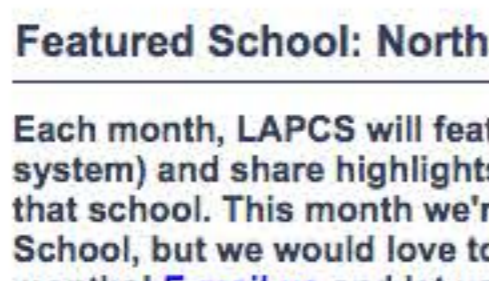
According to a [recent survey](#) by Washington-based advocacy group No Kid Hungry, one in four public school teachers said their students regularly come to school hungry. Teachers described the effects of hunger affecting

student concentration (88%), energy (87%) and leading to poor academic performance (84%) and behavioral problems (85%). Additionally, for the first time in history, more than half of public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

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Featured School: Northshore Charter School

Each month, LAPCS will feature a different school (or school system) and share highlights, milestones, and good news for that school. This month we're featuring Northshore Charter School, but we would love to feature your school in the coming months! [E-mail us](#) and let us share your good news!



Northshore Charter Schools, Inc. is a public school of choice located in Bogalusa, Louisiana. Formed by a board of concerned citizens, the school was developed to give parents a choice. The school opened in August 2013 with 170 students in kindergarten, first, second and ninth grades. This year, we added third,

fourth, fifth and tenth and enrollment expanded to 430. Northshore Charter received a Walton Family Foundation Grant this year and have received grants from International Paper and Dollar General Stores. Next year, the school will add sixth and eleventh grades.

Northshore Charter's high school students recently collected 1,000 books to start a library for Timbi Primary School in Botswana, Africa. Students are also improving their school culture by participating in a national anti-bullying program called Mean Stinks.

Best Practice Tip
Each day, Principal Marc Merriman visits almost all classrooms and provides a short written feedback. This practice allows teachers to keep abreast of what they need to do in order to help our students succeed.

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Partner Connection Spot



From curriculum materials to prospective teacher counseling programs, we've got you covered! Check out some of our vendor partners.

4TH SECTOR SOLUTIONS



4th Sector Solutions is Louisiana's largest and most experienced provider of charter school CFO and HR Director services and training. Our services also include school

operations, food service administration, application support, start-up, strategic planning and facility financing. Our principals have helped 40+ charter schools raise \$300+ million in facility financing.

BENEFIT ANALYST, LLC



With over twenty years of experience in the employee benefits arena Benefit Analyst LLC works with clients across the state. We strive to make sure that our clients offer a highly competitive benefit package. Whether the need be major medical,

dental, vision, group life and disability, flexible spending accounts, or supplemental insurance your employees needs will be met.

Check out our entire list of partners by visiting our [website](#). Don't see something you're searching for? Help us pick the partners you desire by completing a short feedback [survey](#).

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OPSB Seeks Interim School Board Member

The Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) is currently seeking an interim District 1 school board member to fill the seat vacated by Ira Thomas. For more information, visit the [OPSB website](#).

Donate to LAPCS by Shopping Online!



You can donate to LAPCS just by shopping online! Visit [Amazon Smile](#) or [iGive.com](#) and make LAPCS your charity of choice. A percentage of your purchases will be donated to LAPCS.

DONATE NOW!

Points to Ponder: School Choice Technocrats



Each month, we will feature an article or video that we believe is important to consider in the charter and choice movement. This month's article discusses the role that policy plays in the choice movement. Please take a moment to read "School Choice Technocrats Wanted" by Andy Smarick.

NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

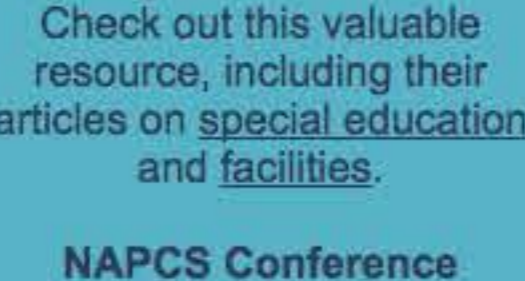
National Charter School Resource Center



The National Charter School Resource Center is an online repository of on-demand resources, information, and technical assistance to support successful planning, authorizing, implementation and sustainability of high-quality charter schools.

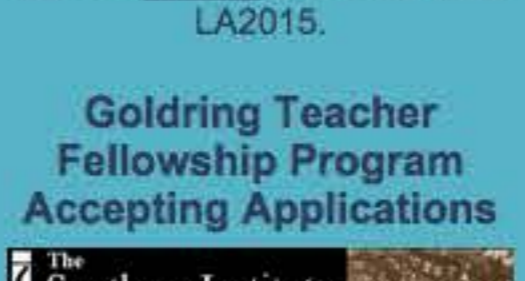
Check out this valuable resource, including their articles on special education and facilities.

NAPCS Conference Discount Code for Louisiana Residents!



The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) conference is in New Orleans this June, and Louisiana residents can register for only \$375! Visit the [NAPCS website](#) and enter code LA2015.

Goldring Teacher Fellowship Program Accepting Applications



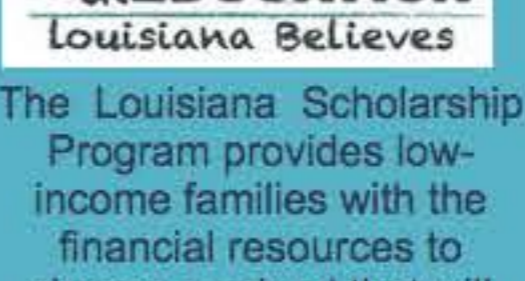
The Southern Institute for Education and Research is currently accepting applications for its Goldring Teacher Fellowship Program in July, which will focus on World War II and the destruction of the Jewish people by the Nazis and other groups. The application deadline is April 30. [Click here](#) for more information.

Red Stick Robotics Announces Competition for Girls in Grades 3-5



Red Stick Robotics offers an animation and robot puzzle competition for students in grades 3-5. The competition, software and training are free. For more information, visit their [website](#).

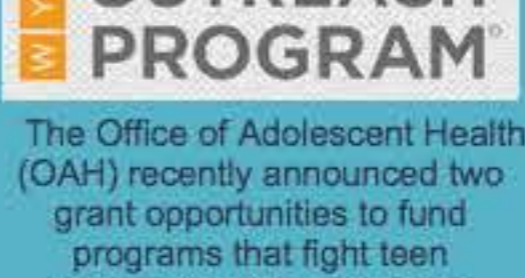
Applications for the Louisiana Scholarship Program Now Available



The Louisiana Scholarship Program provides low-income families with the financial resources to choose a school that will prepare their child for a lifetime of success.

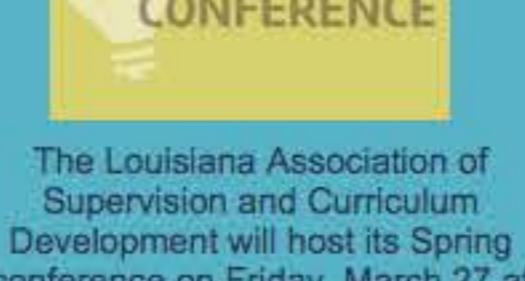
Students must be enrolled in a C, D or F rated school for the 2014-2015 school year or entering kindergarten. For more information or to obtain an application, visit their [website](#).

OAH Grant Opportunities



The Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) recently announced two grant opportunities to fund programs that fight teen pregnancy while promoting positive youth development and engaging the community. The deadline to apply is April 1. For more information, visit their [website](#).

LAA-SCD Conference



The Louisiana Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development will host its Spring conference on Friday, March 27 at the Landmark Hotel in Metairie. E-mail [keveny@mlknola.org](#) for more information.

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