

Red River United

Caddo Federation
of Teachers &
Support Personnel



Bossier Federation
of Teachers &
School Employees

Two Great School Districts! One Super Organization!

Newsletter Volume 3: Issue 3, Holiday 2012

Happy Holidays

Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, and Happy New Year. One of our many gifts this year is the move towards collective bargaining. Red River United's mission is the empowerment of teachers and support personnel by establishing a strong collective voice and achieving high professional standards that reflect the value of public education in Caddo and Bossier Parishes. We promote the welfare of all children through better educational programs in safe schools that have standards of learning and conduct. **Collective bargaining is our vehicle of empowerment to obtain professional dignity, to secure salaries that are commensurate with our education and contribution, and to promote a work place climate where there is justice and fairness.** At the Caddo Parish School Board meeting on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, President Lansdale reminded the School Board that the Louisiana revised statutes covering sick leave quite plainly state, "The [school] board may, as part of a collective bargaining agreement [emphasis added], or by its own policy provide additional compensation or extended leave days in excess of what is required in this Section." She specifically requested the Board to immediately entertain policies to correct the harm caused by the recent legislation. You may view the video on our website at www.redriverunited.org. The collective bargaining process will not be completed overnight. It will take many hours, much debate and dialogue to come to an agreement that addresses the interests of the entire school community. The negotiations will no doubt be intensive and stressful.



Jackie Lansdale
RRU President

Membership and Organizing



Shannon Sullivan
Lead Organizer

Red River United has experienced exponential growth in membership this school year (especially in Bossier Parish). There is power in numbers. There is power because, collectively, we are able to push back upon administration. There is power because we have the clout to propose policy and negotiate with the school board. There is power because we have an extensive network of worksite leaders in each school. Make sure you know who the worksite leaders are at your school. They are your FIRST line of defense. I'm not particularly bashful in promoting Red River United because I know that we follow through on our promises and are passionate about representing our members. Now it's your turn to get involved and speak out!

Remember that YOU are Red River United. However, the old adage is true, we are only as strong as our weakest link. Do you tolerate unfavorable or hostile working conditions? Do you sit quietly and fret about evaluations or test scores? Do you fear retaliation? We are the ones that are here to help. We have processed countless class action grievances over violations of school board policy. We have assisted in writing rebuttals for poor evaluations and discipline. We speak at every school board meeting because the reality of working in the school system needs to be known. Now it's your turn to get involved and speak out! ***Still not a member? Join now!***

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Questions, comments, concerns, and/or ideas? Email us at [redriverunited\[@\]redriverunited.org](mailto:redriverunited[@]redriverunited.org). ***Still not a member? Join now!***

The PSRP Committee Wants You!

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The PSRP (Paraprofessional and School Related Personnel) committee wants you! PSRPs include paraprofessionals, office employees, food service workers, custodians, maintenance workers, bus drivers, security, and special education assistants. The PSRP committee is a representative and diverse community of school employees. Our mission is the empowerment and solidarity of all PSRPs in our schools in order to promote a workplace that is filled with dignity, respect, and community. The PSRP committee will be members representing a wide range of PSRP positions, schools, and experiences. The PSRP committee will use the diverse experiences of the committee members to enact a plan for action on ways in which PSRPs can get a living wage and benefits, and create a work environment filled with dignity, respect, safety, justice, and fairness.

Red River United's PSRP committee will be at the forefront of the dialogue that affects school employee wages, benefits, and workplace standards. Your voice needs to be heard. We need to know your issues so that we can work together to solve them. If you want a hand in making your workplace a better place, please email Summer Lollie at slollie@redriverunited.org or call her cell at 318-453-1671. We need your voice!



Community Outreach Committee

Red River United has recently created a new Committee to help deliver our message to the Community. It is the Community Outreach Coalition and we need you!

The purpose and mission of this committee is to create working relationships with other community groups in our area*. We want to let them know how important our role is in providing a voice for public education. We want to share our core values and concerns before “someone else” does it for us. We plan to meet with these organizations throughout the year to help forge an alliance with other like-minded people within our community. The saying is “it takes a village to raise a child” and we believe “it takes a community to help secure the promise of public education.”** Please join us in our efforts to bring the community together for our children in public education.



- Want to join us in our meetings?
- Know of a group/organization that we need to include?
- Would you like more information about our Coalition?

CONTACT ME: Joanna Maguire, (318) 423-2592, jmaguire@redriverunited.org

Click here: <http://tinyurl.com/CommunityOutreachSurvey> and complete this five minute survey

* Our first contact was Caddo PTA and it has been a great success!

**Volunteer with us this holiday season at The Providence House. Contact me, Joanna Maguire, at (318) 423-2592.

Speak Out! Let Your Voice Be Heard!

We invite you to join our ACE/LEGs Committee (Activists for Congressional Education/Legislative Education Groups) to visit with local state legislators to let them know how the recent legislation has impacted teachers and school employees.

ACE/LEGs along with COPE (Committee on Political Education) will work diligently and proactively to educate the members of the state legislature in advance of the issues coming to a vote; educate them on the issues that impact our members; and let them know we hold them accountable.

In the past, “AFT president Randi Weingarten called on elected and school officials to do school reform ‘with us, not to us,’ and urged teachers, [school employees], and their unions to ‘be the engines of real change in education, providing the ideas and the people that can get the job done.’” This is still relevant today.



Contact us immediately if you want to be included in this proactive approach to legislation. La Tasha Washington, 318-453-2245 or lwashington@redriverunited.org.

Questions, comments, concerns, and/or ideas? Email us at [redriverunited\[@\]redriverunited.org](mailto:redriverunited[@]redriverunited.org). Still not a member? [Join now!](#)

What Have You Done for Me Lately?

~Shannon Sullivan, Lead Organizer



The problem with this statement is not it's intent, but it's direction. Granted, Red River United members have the best local and legal representation, but we are only strong because our members speak out. Currently, members from several schools have filed class action grievances. These grievances are based on violations of school board policies. In many instances Red River United fought for the passage of each policy. Policies vary between Caddo and Bossier parishes.

Reporting & Duty Time: teachers are only required to report to work 15 minutes prior to the instructional day.

Parent Conferences: teachers are to be given 24 hours notice prior to a parent conference and every effort is to be given to scheduling the meeting during a planning period. A member of administration is to be present during parent conferences.

Paperwork Reduction Act: teachers shall not have to duplicate student progress that is already readily available.

Safe Work Environment: employees are assured a safe work environment free of danger posed by hostile parents/guardians. Administration is to provide support to employees if issues arise with parents. This concept also extends to hostile and violent children.

Faculty Meetings: faculty meetings can be held once weekly. Any other meetings must meet with special approval. Employees must be given 24 hours notice of the meeting.

Disparate Treatment: all employees are to be treated equally. Preferential or disparate treatment is not acceptable in the workplace.

Bullying: all employees deserve a workplace without harassment. Red River United does not represent administrators. Please note that the exact same policies do not exist in both Caddo and Bossier Parishes. If you are experiencing any of these violations at your school, let us know immediately.

Next on the radar, evaluations and test scores! The Red River United hall has never been busier.

Learning is more than test score

- ☒ YES ☐ NO Do you believe that our growing fixation on high-stakes testing is damaging our public education system?
- ☒ YES ☐ NO Do you believe that vital parts of the curriculum—arts, music and physical education, to name a few—are being shortchanged because they are not subject to testing?
- ☒ YES ☐ NO Do you believe that teachers are being forced to spend too much time on test preparation and data collection, at the expense of more engaging instruction?
- ☒ YES ☐ NO Do you believe learning is more than a test score?

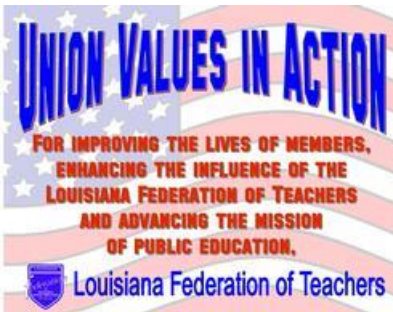
Join us. Sign the petition. Help us put teaching and learning ahead of testing so we can give all children the rich, meaningful public education they deserve.

Visit www.LearningIsMore.org

Questions, comments, concerns, and/or ideas? Email us at [redriverunited\[@\]redriverunited.org](mailto:redriverunited[@]redriverunited.org). Still not a member? [Join now!](#)

Louisiana Federation of Teachers 48th Annual Convention Awards

One purpose and tradition of the LFT Conventions has been to take time to recognize, honor, and say thank you to deserving individuals and/or organizations. Red River United was honored at the LFT Convention, November 18—20, 2012.



2012 LFT Union Values Award—presented to local chapters for specific activities illustrating and affirming the Federation’s commitment to the core values of fairness, opportunity, access, and accountability.

The award recognizes the efforts of local LFT chapters to promote the union agenda and express commitment to the values that make the Federation the largest professional organization for teachers and school employees in Louisiana. “These Federation chapters exemplify what the LFT stands for,” said LFT President Steve Monaghan.

“The Union Values in Action Award serves as an inspiration and a road map for other chapters around the state. It shows how much can be accomplished when we are true to the principles that led us into the union movement in the first place.”

From the Shreveport Times: *Red River United earns award. Red River United, an affiliate of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, is one of six locals to earn the federation's Union Values in Action Award for improving its members' lives, enhancing the union's influence, and advancing public education. The award specifically cites Red River United for its New Teacher Academy, a monthly series of seminars about changes in public education due to recent legislation, and for a symposium series aimed at addressing the legislation.*



2012 Recognizing Membership Building - Growth Award

The Caddo Federation of Teachers & Support Personnel and the Bossier Federation of Teachers & School Employees came together under an umbrella organization with a new title—“Red River United, Local 4995.” The two federations chartered their new group at the Louisiana Federation of Teachers Convention on November 21, 2011. For the past year, the organization has grown by leaps and bounds. The Caddo Chapter has experienced continued growth despite attrition and the closing and consolidation of schools. The Bossier Chapter has literally grown exponentially.

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* New York State United Teachers members have insurance programs through NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. To obtain more information about these plans, members can call 800-626-8101.

AFT+ is your advocate. For information on all AFT+ programs, call 800-238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800-238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure.

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