

# Richland Reporter

Newsletter of the  
**Richland Federation**  
of Teachers & School Employees  
Louisiana Federation of Teachers  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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**David Chaney**, Editor August 2009

## The LFT won't compromise on our strong principles.

**In a legislative session marked by fiscal crisis, limited vision, poor choices and attacks on the professional rights of teachers and school employees, LFT stood firm.**

### **BUDGET CUTS**

*"You can't do more with less. You do less with less."*

The tone of the 2009 session was set with Governor Jindal's pronouncement that the state can do "more with less." His executive budget included cuts to higher education of \$219 million, and nearly \$200 million to K-12 education. He made it clear that no new revenues would be considered. In this climate, the legislature refused to even delay tax breaks to help pay for education.

For the first time, leaders refused to include a 2.75% growth factor in public education's Minimum Foundation Program. Even with that standstill budget, LFT was able to guarantee that professionals with national certification will continue to receive their state supplement.

LFT worked with lawmakers to reduce higher education budget cuts by nearly half, keeping the damage to a minimum.

Despite our best efforts, legislators refused to continue last year's pay raise for school support staff or to fully fund the MFP. They made it clear that there would be no pay raises for teachers.

### **EDUCATOR RIGHTS**

Several so-called "school board reforms" would have eliminated your right to fair hearings and due process. Power grabs by Baton Rouge bureaucrats threatened to take decision-making authority away from public servants elected by voters.

LFT formed a coalition of organizations to protect the rights of employees and preserve local control over school policy. Through events like the Black Monday protest and LFT Action Center message campaigns, we were able to beat back the worst attacks on professional educators.

### **RETIREMENT**

LFT successfully fought efforts to merge state retirement systems and end the popular DROP program. The Federation worked against schemes to replace the current defined benefit plan with one that would make your retirement dependent on the stock market.

### **SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY**

LFT supported efforts to make education relevant as well as rigorous. Passage of a career options law will help lower our state's high dropout rate by creating new paths to high school diplomas and training for skilled jobs.

The Federation also worked for bills that reduce the reliance on just one high-stakes test for children to progress to fifth and ninth grades.

An LFT-sponsored resolution to determine the real cost of educating Louisiana's children was approved by the Senate. Though it was stopped in the House of Representatives this year, LFT will keep fighting to find out exactly how much money is needed to properly fund public education.

**In coming legislative sessions, expect more budget cuts, more attacks on your professional rights and more attempts to portray public education as the culprit, rather than the solution to our state's problems.**

**LFT will never compromise on our basic principles. We will continue to demand professional respect and justice for educators. Please join us in our fight to create a bolder, broader vision for public education and the students we serve.**

# Not BAD enough to be expelled... ...but not GOOD enough to stay in your classroom.



Teachers know that if a student is dangerously disruptive, they can fill out the discipline “long form” that puts the student on track for suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary action.

But state law also mandates a “cooling off” period for students who are annoying and mildly disruptive, but who obviously are not candidates for more serious penalties.

Louisiana Revised Statute 17:416 allows teachers to remove students who are causing problems from the classroom for a short period of time — long enough for the teacher to regain composure and control, and for the student to modify behavior.

No paperwork is necessary to trigger the time-out. Just notify the principal or disciplinarian that the student is causing a problem. Under law, the student must be removed from the classroom for up to 30 minutes in Kindergarten through sixth grade, and for the remainder of the period in higher grades. In grades seven through 12, the student cannot be returned to the classroom during that period unless the teacher agrees.

The student will be allowed to make up any work missed during this period, and may or may not receive full credit.

The principal or his designee must have a counseling session with the student to determine any other course of action, consistent with board policy that is appropriate to the situation.

This law is one of the tools available to teachers to hold students accountable for their behavior and to guarantee that each child has an opportunity to learn in a safe and orderly environment.

**Due to increases in per capita  
 for LFT and AFT,  
 The Richland Federation has to  
 increase our membership dues.  
 Our last increase was 6 years ago.**



## Join the Federation And Make a Difference!



**To Join the RFT/SE, Fill Out Application and Mail to the Richland Federation  
 Payroll Deduction Authorization Richland Parish School Board**

I hereby authorize the Richland Parish School Board to deduct in 12 equal installments, from each of my paychecks, current dues for the Richland Federation of Teachers & School Employees.

This authorization shall remain in effect until revoked by me through proper written notice to the Parish School Board Payroll Department and the RFT/SE.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Dues (circle one)  
**Teacher: \$35.00 School Employee: \$12.00**

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