

A Double Pandemic

A message from our new LACEC President- Keita Rone Wilson

As we prepare for a new school year the nation is faced with a double pandemic- COVID 19 and the impact of systemic racism. Educators and families are tasked with decisions that will determine how instruction and the provision of services will be implemented in the fall. COVID- 19 has highlighted the inequities that exist across school districts and has drawn attention to the most vulnerable populations- children with disabilities, children from low income families and children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These inequities give us a call to action to determine what will be our role as educators and stakeholders in working towards eradicating these issues in our state and in our schools.

The other pandemic that we face as a nation is the systemic racism that plagues our country. The death of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other black men and women has sparked a global movement of protests demanding justice. As organizations across the world reexamine their goals and policies, many are committing to make changes that identify systemic racism and support social justice. As the incoming president of the Louisiana Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children I can assure you that the council is committed to and speaking out against racism and the inequities that exist in our schools and communities.

In solidarity we stand with the Council of Exceptional Children and will continue to look closely at the practices, policies, and curriculum in Louisiana to ensure that it connects to our vision of justice, equity, and inclusion. To that end, we will strive to provide professional development opportunities and resources to better support youth with disabilities, families, and stakeholders. We recognize that we have the prime opportunity to collectively work to be a catalyst toward real change in our state and country.

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced- James Baldwin

Keita Rone Wilson is a native of Detroit, Michigan and has worked in the field of special education over 22 years as a speech pathologist, special education teacher, educational consultant. Keita has both an MS and PhD in special education and is currently an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She works closely with pre-service teachers and her course work addresses special education inclusion. In addition to her work in teacher preparation programs,



Kay is passionate about her research interests which includes culturally responsive teaching, post-secondary education for students with disabilities, and international special education policies and trends, and black women in higher education. Kay is a member of the Council for Exceptional Children and is also a member of the Division on International Special Education Services (DISES) and the Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL). Kay has been a member of the Louisiana CEC since 2017 and is excited about her new role as the President.

*******Update Information*******

Policy Changes During COVID-19

For up-to-date information about school resources, procedures, policies, and practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, use the web addresses below:

State of Louisiana web page: <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/covid-19>

Federal web page: <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus?src=feature>

Specific to exceptional learners: <https://cecblog.typepad.com/policy/>

Council for Exceptional Children's Expo and Convention

On February 5-8, 2020, Council for Exceptional Children's Expo and Convention was held in Portland Oregon. Many individuals from around the State of Louisiana attended this annual event.



Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children Executive Board Officers, Ashlie Abercrombie Allardyce, Past-President and Kay Rone Wilson, President, attended the Representative Assembly/CEC Executive Board Business Meeting. The new CEC Executive Director, Chad Rummel was presented. He and others on the executive board addressed several items such as the changes occurring in CEC, including a new website coming out in August 2020, policy and advocacy that is currently occurring on Capital Hill and CEC's efforts, and the increasing support for state and regional subdivisions and units. Also, each subdivision and unit present worked in collaborative workgroups brainstorming and planning how membership, state collaborations and state CEC involvement can be implemented throughout states and regions, etc.

Our LACEC Ad Hoc, Maggi Bienvenu and Maria Ruiz, LADEC President presented at the Expo and Convention. Their presentation was on Real-World Advocacy: What Are Teachers Willing to Stand Up For? Congratulations for being selected to present.

Overall, the Convention and Expo was fantastic and we all look forward to attending next year's CEC Convention and Expo in Baltimore, Marilyn on March 3-6, 2021!



National CEC Convention from a Student Perspective

By Katlyn Daigle,

LA CEC Student Governor, Southeastern Louisiana University Chapter President, Southeastern Louisiana University Graduate Assistant, Early Intervention Major

As a student representative on the Louisiana state CEC board, I first heard of the National CEC Conference during a state board meeting. I was immediately interested in attending and eager to extend the invite out to other members. As President of Southeastern Louisiana University's Student CEC Chapter #0796, I worked closely with our chapter sponsors Dr. Gerlinde Beckers and Dr. Colleen Klein-Ezell to figure out what needed to happen to ensure that our student chapter could be represented at the conference. We gathered information about the costs to attend (i.e. flight, hotel, and conference registration), looked into financing options, and created an application for those interested in attending. After careful consideration, we decided that we would be able to take 2 other students with us, which worked out perfectly because only 2 students applied -- our chapter's vice president Emma Beckers and secretary Ta'Lynn Belle.

We worked with our sponsors to secure our reservations,



registrations, flights, and University class excuses. We were eager to see what the conference would have to offer, so we downloaded the conference app and started selecting which seminars we wanted to attend. All students attending had differing interests and planned to attend classes that reflected these. Once at the conference, we were amazed by just how much they had to offer. It was an eye-opening experience that allowed me to gain much knowledge about current practices and research. The convention provided great opportunities to gain professional development and network among other professionals in the

field. Throughout the trip, we were able to observe the Portland culture, which was very unique and different from Louisiana. On our last day in Oregon, we spent some time sightseeing, where we saw some of the most amazing scenery and waterfalls that I have personally ever seen. Overall, we greatly enjoyed our conference experience and hope to attend the 2021 CEC Convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

*****Free Membership Friendly Reminder*****

If you took advantage of nonmembers of CEC receiving a free basic membership offer during this pandemic, REMEMBER to renew your membership. It ended on May 31st!

Council for Exceptional Children • National Conference in Portland, Oregon



Action Alert #7: Should Schools be Responsible to Avoid Exposure to COVID-19? Contact your Representative

Should schools be immune from liability (i.e., they cannot be held responsible) related to COVID-19 sickness and death of students, even if the school does not follow COVID-19 procedures? Let your State Representative hear from you!

On 6/17/2020, the House Civil Law & Procedure passed **House Bill 59 (HB59)** by Representative Buddy Mincey which seeks to provide public school systems immunity from liability during declared states of emergency. HB59 now moves to the House Floor for debate.

Specifically, HB59:

- Provides for immunity from civil liability from damages resulting from exposure to infectious disease or acts undertaken in an effort to respond to a declared state of emergency or public health emergency related to an infectious disease.
- Prohibits causes of action related to contraction of an infectious disease at a public school facility, bus, or event based on the actions or failure to act of school agents.

Unlike a law (**Act 362**) just passed during the 2020 Regular Legislative Session, HB59 does not indicate a school would have to comply with COVID-19 procedures established by federal, state, or local governing agencies to be immune from liability.

People with developmental disabilities, including those younger than 17 years old, are more at risk of complications, even death, due to COVID-19, than people without developmental disabilities.

Click here to read the latest research. Louisiana law requires school-aged children to attend school. If this issue is important to you or someone you know, **NOW** is the time to take action!

How to take Action

1. Email or call your State Representative by Monday, June 22, 2020!

Share your personal story and explain how important following COVID-19 procedures are to the health and safety of your child.

You Can Watch Committee Meetings Online

You can watch meetings of the legislature live from the legislature's website. When the meeting is in progress, click the camera icon to access the broadcast. You can also view upcoming schedules for the House and Senate.

Confirm Your Action

- Notify your LaCAN Leader to confirm your action.
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108
 email: info@laddc.org
 website: www.lacanadvocates.org
 facebook: www.facebook.com/LaDDCouncil
 twitter: www.twitter.com/LaDDCouncil

CEC Board Election Results

Sarah Dubois Lemaire will serve as the new CEC Vice President.

Jade Viator will serve as the new CEC Vice Treasurer.

Your passion and dedication to CEC is Exceptional! Thank You!

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Save the Date

NOVEMBER 7-9, 2021

40th Annual

**Super Conference on
Special Education**

Presented by LACEC

Not 2020

**Check out our CEC website:
<http://www.louisianacec.com>**

FREE MEMBERSHIP

As you know LACUE offers free membership, but did you know the many benefits of being a member of LACUE? We are launching a series of FREE virtual professional development events continuing through the end of this year. Check your email frequently so you don't miss out!

We also have all of our events listed on the LACUE website - lacue.org

Why not invite all your colleagues to join LACUE, too!



YOU'RE INVITED TO THE Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference

July 23-24, 2020
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Via Zoom

The 30th Anniversary of the ADA in the Midst of the Pandemic

Featuring State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley and Self-Advocate Lillian Dejean. Sessions will include: ADA Accessibility, Voting Accessibility, Education, Employment, Housing, Transportation, Response to COVID-19, Emergency Preparedness, and Supported Decision Making.

Register:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0ihvEzhvT1ir4FptQIQ4AQ

Questions, concerns, or requests for accommodations:

disability.affairs@la.gov OR (225) 219-7553



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