EBRFT Dues Continued...

Additionally, as we approach our fall political season, we get occasional questions about political campaigns and how much of dues money goes towards it. **ABSOLUTELY NONE (0%) OF YOUR DUES MONEY IS EVER SPENT TO SUPPORT POLITICIANS OR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS!** Anytime there is any type of support or contribution to any campaign, it is funded through a special PAC that members across the country voluntarily fund for the sole purpose of supporting candidates that support public education. But rest assured that none of the dues that you pay to us, or that is paid to the LFT or the AFT is ever used for that purpose.

Legislative Updates Continued...

increase in spending to properly fund public education. Though we didn't walk away empty-handed, it was not the full pay raise that we sought. But this outcome underlines the importance of electing politicians with ideologies that align with our needs and self-interests. This fall, we will have an opportunity to vote for many state legislators, all BESE members, along with the next Governor of Louisiana. Do not sell off your future by voting for the candidates with the best giveaways and tv commercials. Join us in vetting the candidates to find out where they stand on funding and supporting public education.

***May 2023**--EBRFT Executive Board Members join LFT members from across the state in testifying in support of pay raises.*

Member Benefit Spotlight: Free Identity Theft Protection

The Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles was hit by a cyber attack resulting in a massive data breach. Each resident is encouraged to take action to protect their identity. Luckily, all EBRFT members have access to free identity theft protection through the AFT Member Benefits Program. Our protection includes:

- **Assisted recovery for victims of identity theft**. This means you will receive unlimited step-by-step guidance and advice from a fraud resolution specialist should you fall victim to identity theft due to a number of circumstances.
- **$10,000 expense reimbursement coverage.** If you have any out-of-pocket expenses related to identity theft, this policy will reimburse you up to $10,000.
- **Free ID Threat Score**. Your ID Threat Score is a one-time snapshot of your current vulnerability to identity theft. It provides real-time analysis of identity fraud threats based on algorithms and historical data. The score is a multifaceted analysis of your current identity fraud risk across a continuously updated network of consumer data containing more than 250 billion data elements.
- **Free Safe Wallet.** Secure your credit and debit card numbers, driver's license number, and others in a secure place in case your purse or wallet is lost or stolen. You'll have easy access from your dashboard to view these items, as well as associated phone numbers for having them replaced.

To access your **FREE** member benefit, visit
www.clcidprotect.net/co/home/aft
It's simple to enroll; all you need is a non-work email address!

East Baton Rouge Federation of Teachers & School Employees
FEDERATION NEWS
August 2023

From the Desk of the President

Welcome Back!

Welcome back to school! We are thrilled to welcome our current members and our future members to the 2023-2024 school year. We hope that you were able to relax and make special memories with your family and friends. Now it is time to look forward to a wonderful and productive school year throughout East Baton Rouge Parish.

We are already back to business, starting in July with our Back to School Kickoff for our Building Reps. They were able to come together and discuss the issues and education policy updates that will have a direct impact on what happens in our classrooms. In this Back to School Newsletter, we give a brief overview of the results of the Legislative Session and School Board updates. Our incredible EBRFT staff and Executive Board are looking forward to working with you this year. We have been hard at work preparing Back to School Kits to distribute to our current members and new member kits for our new signees.

Our Political Committee is looking for members that are interested in joining. November elections are right around the corner and as a local, we must be diligent when selecting the individuals we endorse. If you have an interest in the political process or always wanted to get more involved or more informed, our Political Committee is the place for you! Contact our Political Committee Chair, Kirk Green at ***ebrftpolitical@gmail.com*** for more information.

I'm pleased with the hard work that was done this past Legislative Session that resulted in pay raises. Ultimately, teachers will receive $2000 and support workers will receive $1000 from the state, in addition to $4000 for teachers and $2000 for support workers from EBR School District. Although we would have appreciated more money, this is a step in the right direction. When we learn how and when the additional funds will be distributed, we will share it with you.

We are looking forward to seeing each of you at our monthly events. The first Membership Meeting for this school year will be on Tuesday, August 22nd at 4:30 at the Main Library @ Goodwood. We also have lounge visits scheduled at schools across the parish for the upcoming weeks. If you want us to schedule a lounge visit for your school, reach out to us so that we can make it happen; we love keeping our members informed!

We look forward to seeing and working with you soon. Have a great 2023-2024 school year!

Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, August 22nd
August Membership Meeting
4:30-5:30 Main Library @ Goodwood

Monday, September 4th
Labor Day Holiday

Wednesday, September 20th
Professional Development Day

Tuesday, September 26th
September Membership Meeting
4:30-5:30 Main Library @ Goodwood

EBR Board Approves Pay Raises

The EBRP School Board approved a pay raise of $4000 for teachers and $2000 for support workers at a Special School Board Meeting on Thursday, July 13th. This followed months of meetings and deliberation with the community, district employees and union presidents. The approved budget also includes $400 for classroom supplies for each teacher, additional money earmarked to support teachers, and funding for Professional Development and Summer Employment.

We want to send a special "THANK YOU" to all of the EBRFT members that spoke up about the importance of increasing the funding to support public education. Whether you attended board meetings, emailed school board members, or spoke in person, you made your opinion heard and helped to make this win happen.

2023-2024 EBRFT Dues

We want to start this school year off by ensuring that there is transparency regarding your dues money. As you know, your membership in EBRFT allows you to be apart of this local, in addition to the Louisiana Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers. When we receive dues money from our members, the bulk of the money is paid in per capita dues to the two organizations. For the last two years, the American Federation of Teachers' delegates voted to increase the amount of per capita dues owed. But our local executive board voted to absorb the additional costs by tightening our operating budget.

For this school year, you will see a dues increase, somewhere between $0.50 and $1.00 (depending on your job classification) to ensure that the local is able to pay per capita dues and not operate in a deficit. The new bi-monthly dues are:

Teachers	$31.00
Secretaries	$17.00
Clerks	$14.00
Paraprofessionals	$10.00

Continued on page 4...

EBR Leaders Rate Dr. Narcisse's Performance

School board members appear to be torn when it comes to Dr. Narcisse's job performance. He was hired 29 months ago when the then-superintendent resigned due to an undisclosed illness after being on the job for only a couple of months.

His latest annual evaluation presented a unique situation due to it being conducted in December by the outgoing board, with 6 of the 9 evaluating members not returning. The evaluation was conducted anonymously with each member assigned a letter. Of the 9 members, one abstained from evaluating, two gave a perfect 4.0 rating, two nearly perfect at 3.96 and 3.71, and one at 3.55. The three members that gave lower ratings came in at 2.96, 2.93, and 2.09. This gives Dr. Narcisse a composite score of 3.42 on a 4-point scale; only slightly below his predecessor, Warren Drake's highest score of his five-year tenure, 3.56.

When looking at Dr. Narcisse's tenure in EBR, there is a good mixture of positive movement and room for improvement. It is almost universally agreed that there needs to be an improvement in the area of communication and the dissemination of information to both employees and to the community. Positive steps have been taken and more improvement is expected. However, the board acknowledged his strengths in establishing good relations with government, educational, business, and community leaders. They gave him a high rating on spearheading and implementing the strategic plan, which included a standardized reading curriculum as well as standard performance measure indicators across all schools.

As stated, there is room for improvement, but before deciding on his future with this district, we must examine what is best for our students and our district. Also, remember how arduous and divisive the last superintendent search was for our community. We know what we have but we don't know what lies ahead.

Legislative Updates

Our biggest hurdle of the Legislative Session was securing state-funded permanent pay increases for our employees. We poured our time, efforts and resources into this, starting with holding fast to Gov Edwards's campaign promise to increase educator salaries to the Southern Regional Average. Prior to the start of the session, he made declarations of his intent to raise teacher salaries by $3000 and support workers by $1500 across-the-board. We expected a larger increase but were encouraged by his starting point.Despite his request, BESE decided on a smaller raise of $2000 for teachers and $1000 for support workers, as well as additional funding for teachers in "high needs" areas, up to the discretion of local school boards.

For reference, for Louisiana educators to receive state-funded permanent pay raises (not one-time stipends) BESE must include the increase in the MFP (Minimum Foundation Program) funding proposal that they submit to the Legislature. The Legislature must then pass the proposal and fully fund the MFP. If they don't pass it, they must send it back to BESE for amendment; the Legislature cannot amend BESE's proposals.

BESE's MFP proposal, otherwise referred to as SCR 2, was passed by the Senate, so our attention was turned towards the House of Representatives. LFT President, Larry Carter, testified before the House Appropriations Committee about the importance of passing a significant raise.His remarks outlined the experiences of Louisiana's teachers and school employees. Using data collected from Federation members across the state, he affirmed that:

- 97% of teachers and 98% of staff felt that they do not make enough to raise a family.
- 91% of teachers said that the statewide pay raises received in recent years were less than the increase in cost of living and almost 80% said they've been completely absorbed by the rise in insurance premiums.
- 84% of teachers and 2/3 of staff said they have considered leaving their current position.
- 37% are working at least one other job.

***May 2023**--EBRFT President, Angela Reams-Brown, and other leaders testified to the Senate Education Committee about the importance of pay raises instead of one-time stipends for educators.*

EBRFT President, Angela Reams-Brown, joined President Carter, along with other local presidents, members, LFT Legislative Director Cynthia Posey, and LFT Communications Director Heather Cushman as advocates for our raises. Despite being inundated with hundreds of thousands of emails and notes from LFT members and many impassioned testimonies, the House of Representatives chose not to take up SCR2, thus preventing a permanent pay raise. They did allocate a one-time stipend of $2000 for teachers and $1000 for support workers, but it is not permanent, so it will not count toward future retirement benefit payouts.

We appreciate every member that took the time to attend a session, call/email/write a legislator, send a floor note, and complete the surveys that armed us with the data necessary to justify the request for salary increases. This was a hard-fought battle against numerous detractors and legislators that opposed an

Continued on page 4