

## LPSS will offer “Arts Experiences for All” to 14,979 students in new school year with community partners



“Arts Experiences for All” community partners celebrate outside of the July 13, 2022 school board meeting. From Left: Lyle Girouard (AcA), Samuel Oliver (AcA), Paget Guidry (LPSS), Burnell Lemoine (AcA), Bree Sargent (AcA), Dana Baker (Acadiana Symphony Orchestra), and Louanne Greenwald (Hilliard Museum)

**LAFAYETTE, LA** - The arts improve academic performance and encourage students to stay engaged in learning year-round—this is the basis for a 43 year partnership between Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS) and Acadiana Center for the Arts (AcA).

The arts also offer young people the tools to heal from emotional traumas and to develop key social skills like public speaking and self-expression. This is one of the reasons that LPSS will offer “Arts Experiences for All” to students PreK through 5th grades starting in the new 2022 school year.

“Arts Experiences for All” has a clear vision: Every student Pre-K through 5th grade will receive in-school and off-campus experiences in all art forms.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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"Now, 14,979 students—every single LPSS student beginning in PreK—will receive a full semester of lessons from AcA's team of PACE teaching artists, plus a comprehensive selection of other cultural experiences," says AcA Executive Director Samuel Oliver. "This level of comprehensive exposure to the arts will change the lives of Lafayette's future generations. AcA is proud of our continued and expanding role with LPSS' new program."

AcA's teaching artists are professional artists from across Acadiana who share their talents, while also teaching a core subject area like Science, Math, Social Studies, or English Language Arts. A first grade PACE lesson, for example, might focus on drawing a sunflower using pastels and color blending, while they also review important elements of Life Sciences: the water cycle, life cycle, and more. This kind of learning reinforces the core academics and helps struggling students engage more fully in their learning.

LPSS Superintendent Irma Trosclair says, "Lafayette is a community rich in the arts and we are fortunate to have access to a variety of art experiences. Through collaborations with community partners like AcA, our students will begin to enjoy meaningful art experiences that will benefit them throughout their academic careers. This initiative supports LPSS's goal of providing a variety of educational experiences for all students."

Additionally, community partners including Acadiana Center for the Arts, Acadiana Symphony Orchestra and Conservatory, Hilliard Museum, and Performing Arts Serving Acadiana will offer off-campus arts experiences so that every student from Pre-K through 5th grade will visit an art museum, take a creative writing class, and visit either the Heymann Center or Angelle Hall for performances of dance, theater, and classical, and popular music.

LPSS Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mark Rabalais says, "As a district leader for Lafayette Parish, I am proud that we serve a community that acknowledges the importance of the arts and embraces the potential impact it can have on our students. Arts Experiences for All is one more testimony to the tremendous bond shared by AcA and LPSS dedicated to educating the "whole-child." These experiences will give students a new appreciation of culture, history, and humanities as experienced through multiple art forms. It is an exciting time for our students and a celebration of the AcA's commitment to LPSS students."

LPSS Arts Supervisor Paget Guidry presented the new program to school board members during their July meeting. Her presentation included the price tag of \$29.94 per student, which is being funded through existing LPSS funds, Title I funds and fundraising efforts led by the community arts partners.



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**About AcA**

Founded in 1975, the Acadiana Center for the Arts (“AcA”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and regional arts council with the mission of “fostering art and culture in Acadiana.”

Rooted in a cultural community that has made its mark on the world through food, music, and art, AcA aims to ensure that this living culture flourishes for generations to come.

AcA aims to bring equitable access to the arts through intensive residency work in schools and supports fair compensation of artists. On average, AcA serves over 300,000 people annually and provides fair compensation to 2,700 artists.

AcA supports the creation of new works of art, exhibits, festivals, performances, and public art across an eight-parish region that includes Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Vermilion Parishes.