

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM (LSM)
NEW ORLEANS JAZZ MUSEUM AT THE OLD US MINT
400 ESPLANADE AVENUE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025
11:00AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Suzanne Perlis, Lisa Ballay, Nick Mueller.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bunnie Canon.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Wendy Lodrig.

LSM STAFF PRESENT: Becky Mackie, Blaze D'Amico, Chris Cook, Cody Scallions, Lisa McLendon, Nicole Coleman.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jason Strada

A quorum was present

1. **Call to Order** – Committee members met at the Cabildo at 11:00 a.m. to visit a beading class led by Big Chief Darryl Montana. Suzanne Perlis officially called the meeting to order at 11:36 a.m.
2. **Adoption of the Agenda** – Nick Mueller motioned to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Wendy Lodrig, and it was unanimously approved.
3. **Adoption of the Minutes** – Lisa Ballay motioned to adopt the minutes from August 6, 2025 committee meeting. The committee will receive a copy of the October 1, 2025 meeting notes at the next committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Nick Mueller, and it was unanimously approved.
4. **Approve Committee Charter** – Wendy Lodrig motioned to approve Education Committee Charter. The motion was seconded by Lisa Ballay, and it was unanimously approved.
5. **Chairman's Report** – Suzanne Perlis stated that she did not have a formal Chairman's Report but instead posed a question to the committee for discussion. As this is a newly formed committee, she asked whether the committee should take a proactive role in identifying opportunities to promote and fund education programming, or whether it should primarily respond to suggestions and requests from staff. She noted that this discussion would help shape the committee's role and direction moving into the new year.

Becky Mackie explained that board and committee roles are defined by legislative governance and legal guidance. The board's authority includes electing officers, overseeing the collection, and trusteeship of the Irby Trust and Pontalba properties, but not making decisions on educational programming.

She stated that the committee intends to increase collaboration between staff and board members. Staff are open to input, ideas, and suggestions from committee members, with the understanding

that financial constraints exist and new initiatives must include funding considerations. The committee will serve as a way for the board to provide guidance and counsel while staff continue to inform members of ongoing and planned educational efforts.

- 6. Director's Report** – Becky Mackie introduced Blaze D'Amico as the new Director of Development, noting the departure of former Director Anise Fiello to the for-profit sector. Ms. D'Amico shared her background in law, including a JD from Tulane University and an LLM in Art Law from Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome, along with prior experience at the Jazz Museum and most recently as Executive Director of Rickrack. She expressed enthusiasm for returning to the state museum system and supporting arts and culture in Louisiana.

The Education Department is becoming more collaborative through the Education Roundup team, with increased involvement from regional museums and more advanced program planning, and recognized Cody, Chris, and the team for their efforts.

The museum has been selected as a field trip opportunity for the federally sponsored America 250 National Field Trip competition. She noted collaboration with local organizations, including the National WWII Museum, as part of the New Orleans experience for student essay award recipients.

Additionally, Becky Mackie reported on an initiative from the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum and its Friends group to develop an animated graphic novel highlighting Charles Page, a Black patent holder for an early airship, and Leo Ortega, an early helicopter designer from North Louisiana. She noted that a video production firm has been engaged and that the project is expected to be released later this month or next month, and that staff have been contacted to assist with marketing and promotion following the launch.

- 7. Capitol Park** – Cody Scallions reported that education markets vary significantly across regional museums and that staff have been tasked with identifying and targeting the specific needs of their local audiences. He noted recent success at regional sites, including Thibodaux, where staff identified community needs and are developing recurring and smaller-scale programs based on local interests.

Cody highlighted Baton Rouge as a school-group–driven market, reporting approximately 690 student visitors in November and an anticipated 900+ students in December. He explained that educators have developed tailored educational packets aligned with teacher requests and K–12 curriculum needs. He also reported that educators and the Friends group at Capitol Park are collaborating on a 6–12 month education plan, with the goal of presenting the Board with a comprehensive education overview, program details, pricing, and identified needs at a future meeting.

He concluded by noting that education programming at regional sites is being revitalized, with planning focused six to eight months ahead, and identified future needs including funding for teacher workshops and hands-on educational activities, particularly in preparation for increased visitation related to America 250.

- 8. Jackson Square Museum** – Chris Cook reported that Creative Aging classes continue to serve as a flagship program, noting high supply costs that require ongoing grant support and plans to expand the program into memory care offerings. He explained that the program engages older adults through arts and cultural activities that promote social connection and cognitive stimulation.

He also reported that a \$15,000 Library of Congress grant will support the development of a primary sources curriculum connected to the Cabildo exhibit, with a public release planned for March 2026.

Additionally, Chris shared updates on the America 250 Traveling Trunks program, which is preparing 20 trunks focused on Spanish colonial Louisiana in partnership with the Louisiana State Library. Distribution to parish libraries and related teacher trainings are planned for June 2026.

Chris concluded by noting that funding for teacher workshops remains a priority and suggested integrating workshops into summer school schedules to increase cost-effectiveness, participation, and collaboration with schools.

The committee emphasized collaborating with Friends organizations to strengthen funding and educational programs, and agreed to continue developing regional education teams with market-specific programming. They discussed finalizing the traveling trunks program, maintaining and tracking educational materials, and supporting Civil Rights Museum and cross-museum outreach through school and organizational partnerships.

9. **Jazz Museum** – Due to a lack of time, the Jazz Museum report was tabled and will be presented at the next committee meeting.
10. **Old Business** – There was no old business.
11. **New Business** – There was no new business.
12. **Adjourn** - Meeting adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Minutes Accepted



Suzanne Perlis, Chair