

Great Ideas for Great Public Schools

LOUISIANA

Community's top concern: what kids do when they're not in school

In 2008, the Bogalusa community mounted the **MAGIC initiative—short for Making Achievement Gains in Our Community**—in cooperation with NEA, the National League of Cities, the Bogalusa City School District, the Louisiana Association of Educators, parents, students, and community groups. The initiative is the product of a community conversation that focused on finding ways to provide effective, accessible out-of-school activities and afterschool programs. Small groups met with a trained moderator and recorder, considered various approaches, and identified priorities: keep kids off the streets, give them better learning opportunities, and broaden their horizons with new cultural experiences.

Outcomes

- Collaboration among youth service agencies and the school system has increased.
- The school system is working with the local YMCA and YWCA on an application for a 21st century learning grant to continue collaborative work.

Parent survey

- The greatest challenges with regard to out-of-school activities is finding programs and paying for them.
- Top preferences for areas of focus were homework help, tutoring, reading, writing, music lessons, drama, and computer-based activities.
- When asked how often they might use a summer program, 85 percent responded that they would use it at least occasionally and 34 percent said they would use a summer program every weekday.

Community goals

- Provide an opportunity for community members to speak with one another about out-of-school activities for young people.
- Find common ground.
- Establish solutions and agree on strategies to provide effective, accessible programs for youth.
- Develop a plan for the community to move forward on issues involving out-of-school activities.

For more information:

Joyce Haynes, president, Louisiana Association of Educators, 337-945-1827, joyce.haynes@lae.org
Milton Gholar, executive committee, Louisiana Association of Educators, 985-516-7476



Great Public Schools for Every Student