

2023 App Round 1: Elise Boutin

Louisiana Department of Education: A Call For Excellent Educators

Which award do you want to apply for?

Teacher of the Year

The Louisiana Department of Education recognizes that great teachers and school leaders are critical to student success. Annually, the Department, in partnership with

Dream Teachers
and the

Louisiana Association of Principals

, honors the state's most exceptional educators through the Teacher and Principal of the Year programs.

The Louisiana Teacher and Principal of the Year awards programs provide an opportunity to acknowledge those educators who are making exceptional gains with students. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

Criteria- An exemplary candidate for Teacher and Principal of the Year is one who:

- Demonstrates **excellence and expertise** in the field, **guiding students** (and for principals, also teachers) of **all** backgrounds and abilities to **achieve success**.
- Demonstrates **leadership and innovation** in and outside of the school building walls and **helps students/education stakeholders be successful**.
- **Bullds collaborative relationships** with **colleagues, students and families** to create a **school culture** that is respectful, inclusive and **positively impacts student growth and learning**.
- **Deliberately connects** the classroom/school to the **community** to positively **impact the students, school and community**.
- Is **inspiring, compelling, professional** and expresses themselves in an **engaging and clear way**, has the ability to **connect with and represent** the state.

Resources

To access application resources and materials, visit the

Award's page Resource Library.

Naming Convention - When uploading documents within your application, please title each document using this naming convention:

TOY or POY, First and Last Name, Document Name. For example, "TOY *Mary Smith* Reflection Response Upload"

I. Basic Information

First Name

Elise

Last Name

Boutin

Title

Ms.

Phone number with area code (preferable cell). List phone number with hyphens. For example, 225-342-1234.

██████████

Does this phone number receive text messages?

Yes

Email Address

████████████████████

Ethnicity

White

Division Level

High School

If you serve students across multiple division levels, please check the box below.

Grade(s) You Currently Teach

Twelfth

Subject(s) You Currently Teach

English/Language Arts, Other

If "Other" please describe

Publications

How many years have you been a classroom teacher, including this year? (enter numeric value, such as "6.")

14

Professional Bio Add your professional bio in the textbox below. Your Professional Bio should be written in third person. (250 words or less) Please follow the guidelines outlined

here

Add Professional Bio Here

Elise Boutin is an English and publications teacher at Rayne High School in Acadia Parish. She earned a Bachelor's degree in General Studies from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, a Master's of Art in Teaching from McNeese State University, and is currently working on a Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. After 14 years of teaching, Boutin believes that connecting curriculum to experiences is the most important aspect of teaching students to become lifelong learners.

In 2014, Boutin revived the Rayne, Alive! program –a student-produced YouTube channel. Students have worked with professionals from local news stations; they have even met celebrities and had them create intros for episodes. The program has built a culture on campus and helps students to recognize the opportunities that exist on campus and in the area.

Boutin started a Senior Project Fair for students to feature their capstone projects in the areas of Academics, Career, and Community Service. She also connects high school students to community activities through sponsoring the Interact Club, which works in conjunction with Rayne Rotary Club. Boutin also started a Cross Country team this past year. Runners participated in meets and 5ks and were welcomed by the local running community.

Students leave her classroom prepared for their next step and are ready to, "Be a Liver," a lesson that reminds you to do what is right for yourself if even if no one else gets it.

II. School Related Information

School "System/District" Name (please start typing) Select "Other" if your school system isn't listed.

Acadia Parish

If your school system/district was not listed above, please enter here

"School" Name (please start typing) School name is required. If your school is not listed, please proceed to enter name in next box.

Rayne High School

If your school is not listed, please enter the school name in the textbox below. Add full school name, such as "L.B. Landry Walker High School" and not "Landry Walker." You may find the full school name in the LA School and Center Finder List, see

here

If your school is not listed above, please enter here

Were you at a different school last year?

No

Grade(s) at Your Current School:

Twelfth

Current School Address

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

School Phone Number (including area code). List phone number with hyphens, such as 123-456-7890.

[REDACTED]

Principal's Name (first and last)

[REDACTED]

Principal's Email

[REDACTED]

Principal's Office Phone (including area code and extension, if applicable)

[REDACTED]

Region Number- Click the Region List link to find the region number for your school system parish. If you are a charter/independent school, please select the parish where your school is located. For example, if your school is Lake Charles Charter, even though your school is not part of Calcasieu Parish, you would select region 5 as your school is located in the Calcasieu Parish "region." See

Region List Here.

Check Your Region Number

4

*III. Media Related Information

Professional Facebook profile/name (optional)

Professional Instagram profile (optional)

Twitter handle (optional)

Add an original social media quote (that could be used in print) in the textbox below that captures the essence of you as an educator. (280 character limit)

Be a Liver. Find what you love and never stop learning about it.

Other Social Media Account (optional)

Personal Blog Site URL (optional)

Personal Website URL (optional)

Classroom Website URL (optional)

IV. Awards/Leadership Roles

If you serve in any leadership roles, such as master teacher, mentor teacher, TAP master teacher, etc., please select the checkbox for the role(s) and add the number of years served for each role in the textbox below.

Other leadership role

If you serve/served in other leadership roles, please add role(s) and number of years served for each role in the textbox below.

English Department Head for 5 years

List any national awards or recognition you've received (include year won)

List any state or local awards or recognition you've received (include year won)

2024 Acadia Parish Teacher of the Year, 2023 Rayne High School Teacher of the Year, Cox Teacher of the Week Nov 2016, 2009 Outstanding Graduate of the College of General Studies

Has your work been published in journals or other juried and/or peer-review sources?

No

If "yes" please describe

V. Education Information

What year did you receive your baccalaureate degree? Add degree conferral year, such as 2011, in the textbox below.

2009

You may find that information in the Teach LA website

here

Choose the highest degree you have earned.

Masters

Did you attend an in-state or out-of-state institution for your undergraduate degree?

in-state

Please select the institution you attended for your undergraduate degree.

University of Louisiana Lafayette

Did you attend an in-state or out-of-state institution for your masters degree?

in-state

Please select the institution you attended for your masters degree.

McNeese State University

List your undergraduate major(s) in the textbox below.

General Studies with a concentration in Humanities and Communications

List your graduate major(s)/any additional major(s)/certification areas in the textbox below.

Master's of Arts in Teaching

VI. Certifications

List where you completed your traditional teacher preparation program or alternate teacher preparation program.

McNeese State University

****Do you hold a valid LA teaching certificate?***

Upload the most recent version of your teaching/educational leadership certificate. Certificates may be found on the Teach LA website here

Certificate Upload

[REDACTED]

VII. Written Reflection Response One

Describe a content lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher and include how you engage students of all backgrounds and abilities in the learning. In your response, include how your intentional instructional decisions impact student learning and success, as well as reveal your beliefs about teaching and learning. (750 words or less)

Add Reflection Response One Here:

The Senior Project Unit best defines my teaching pedagogy. The concept's inception began when I transitioned from teaching English III to all senior English courses: English IV Honors, English IV, and Business English. After using Guidebooks' lessons for years, I had a bit of an issue with my Business English courses not quite being able to perform with my usual techniques. At the end of the first quarter, the majority of students had a D or F in the course. I decided to sit with each student to personally assess and understand their strengths and challenges. Because the curriculum for the course is not a required set, I knew I had the opportunity to add some creativity to the lessons without sacrificing the standards required by the state.

I asked each student the following questions: "What would make you excited to come to my class each day? What is a topic you have always wanted to study? What do you want to do after you graduate?"

The overwhelming answer was, "I don't know." This is where I had an epiphany: students go through school for nearly 12 years and rarely learn how to follow their instincts, understand their strengths, and make a personal decision—yet we expect them to know what they want to do once they graduate? My role as the senior English teacher quickly evolved and I expressed it the next day to all of my classes: My goal is that when you walk across the stage, you know your next step. Whether it is a postsecondary education or entering the workforce, you have a plan to reach your goal.

Upon further reflection, I knew this concept applied to my University students, as well. Our diploma curriculum requires them to take classes that prepare them for a postsecondary education, but many of them don't have the opportunities to study possible career paths, so I often see students who struggle with choosing a major. Allowing a unit that provided an opportunity to study a possible career would be beneficial.

The first phase of this unit was a research study on a topic in the area of career, community service, or academics. The culmination of their research was assessed through a traditional research paper. After the first year, I was still not satisfied with the level of achievement on the assessment. I felt like there wasn't enough differentiation.

The following year, I added a presentation component to the unit that way students had an additional means to show mastery. The year after that students had to add a project board or Slides presentation to allow students a creative form of assessment. I enjoyed seeing how these students learned and how excited they were to discuss their topics. Then the big idea happened: a Senior Project Fair.

I really wanted to connect students with members of the community. I decided to add a mentor aspect of the project. I helped to link students with experts in the area on whatever topic they chose. They had the option to only use them as a source for their research or they could go shadow in order to get some experience. The end of the project would conclude with a Fair that invited local business owners, important community members, parents, and underclassmen to experience what our seniors spent months preparing for. Students would be equipped with personal business cards that way they can establish networks with potential career paths. I also collected donations in the form of gift cards and baskets and at the end of the fair, all students who participated had their name in a drawing, and we pulled door prizes. It became a day to celebrate all of their hard work.

Through the past few fairs I have been overwhelmed by their work. We've had a service project that established a food pantry in front of school that stays stocked with dry goods year-round. An academic project chronicled the 1995 basketball team who captured our only state title. Although there were many career projects that allowed students a step toward their next goal, there were also many that highlighted why a student would not want to follow-through with that chosen career, which saved them lots of time and money.

This unit exemplifies my pedagogy because it offers students' choices and it helps them to apply their skills to a real-life application. It also instills the importance learning plays in reaching a goal—and I hope that stays with them forever.

Reflection Response One- Optional file upload: (Use this feature if you wish to upload a document, video, photo, etc., to accompany your reflection response. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY_Mary_Smith_ Reflection Response One."

E_Boutin_Senior Project Fair (1).mp4

VIII. Written Reflection Response Two

Describe specific ways in which you deliberately connect your students with the community. Show how these community connections dissolve classroom/school walls and impact student learning/success for all. (750 words or less)

Add Reflection Response Two Here:

I am a firm believer that schools will thrive if they have a vibrant community. In small towns, this can be a beautiful thing to cultivate because a lot of the high school activities create the social equity for its denizens. My principal asked me to sponsor the Interact Club two years ago after the club had dissolved during COVID. Interact works with the Rayne Rotary Club to offer students community service opportunities. This allows members to engage in events around the community, which strengthens local events and also helps citizens to see our students volunteering and caring for their town.

I thoroughly enjoy serving as the sponsor, or as I see it—Volunteer Liaison. Over the past two years, I have helped students to serve at civic functions that range from an Old Spanish Trail Day to delivering Thanksgiving baskets to families in need. Students have formed new friendships while playing holiday games at the neighboring Kindergarten.

Our Club last year consisted of 35 members. I did not have requirements to join because I wanted to offer anyone a chance to get involved regardless of their GPA or past transgressions. As long as they kept up with appropriate school behavior moving forward, they were welcome to join. This invited a different group of students to join that otherwise wouldn't have tried this endeavor.

I also allowed anyone from grades 9-12 to run for office. I've taught upperclassmen for a while and they are very busy. A younger officer may lack a confidence, but they have a more time. We had a freshman girl who won the presidency and she led with tenacity and creativity. She would show up to my classroom with ideas, like sending Christmas cards to our local nursing home—and then would follow-through with getting cards and a list of names from the residency. She ended up winning Aspiring Interactor of the Year at the Interact Convention. This year she attended RYLA, the leadership camp for Rotary Club. She was invited back to serve at the next RYLA event for future campers—a truly rare honor.

This year, we have 75 members. Our Project of the Year is to run the "Lil' Food Pantry" that was started last year by one of our members who developed the pantry as her senior project. With the efforts of two other clubs, we have successfully collected numerous crates of food and have kept the pantry constantly stocked. Students or residents can take whatever they need. Students taking challenging issues and creating real solutions has been remarkable to witness.

Another way that I have connected students to the community is by starting a Cross Country team. Last year, our HOSA club had a color run that I competed in and placed third. The two young men who placed ahead of me showed such promise as distance runners, and I thought it was a shame that they didn't have a team. Neither of them had ever run a 5K before that race.

In August, one of them asked me if we could start a team. After some contemplation and encouragement from one of my younger sons who also wanted to start running in middle school, I decided to give it a try. I had two weeks to get in paperwork and find funding. I asked local businesses and friends to donate to our team, and I ended up raising \$900. This allowed for the runners to compete in Cross Country meets and some local 5K races. We grew from two boys to a team of 9 by the end of the season.

One runner made it to the state meet where he placed in the top 40%. Several of my runners earned top three medals in local 5Ks. Local runners from Rayne fully embraced these young athletes and would cheer them on along the route and talk to them after races. None of my runners realized that there was even a running community for adults. Two of my runners wanted to compete for the "Cajun Triple Crown" which is a three-race series: The Downtown 8K, The Cajun Cup 10K, and the Vermilion Run 10-miler. Of course, they didn't want to run alone, so we are scheduled to compete in the final 10-mile race on January 20th.

Taking these chances to share some of my values --community service and health--has changed how students interact with me.

Reflection Response Two- Optional file upload: (Use this feature if you wish to upload a document, video, photo, etc., to accompany your reflection response. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY_Mary_Smith_ Reflection Response Two")

IX. Video Response

What work best describes you as a leader and/or an innovator? In your response, explain your role, the positive impact this work has made on teachers, students and/or the education profession and also share the status of this work today. (2 minutes or less)

Add the YouTube video URL in the space below.

Add your YouTube video URL Here: (video should be 2 minutes or less)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfw7YP1Kauo>

Video Response- Optional file upload: (Use this feature if you wish to upload a document, video, photo, etc., to accompany your video response. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY_Mary_Smith_Video Response Upload")

X. Education Issue

What is an education issue you are most passionate about? Add your response in the textbox below in five words or less, Ex: Student Voice and Empowerment

Connecting students with opportunities

Education Issue- Optional file upload: Use this feature if you want to upload an item, such as a photo, newspaper article, etc., which relates to your education issue topic/work. Please label document accordingly, such as, "TOY_Mary_Smith_Education Issue Upload."

Add a "Six Word Story" that captures the essence of you as an educator. For example, "He Is..because of what was," "Teaching Art is an Abstract Artform" and "I Teach So I Change Lives."

"Love to learn. Learn to love."

XI. Uploads

*Note- To view uploads, select small yellow triangle next to the record title at the top of the page and select "preview form"

When uploading documents within your application, please title each document using this naming convention:

TOY or POY_ First Name_Last Name_Document Name. For ex., "TOY_Mary Smith_Reflection Response Upload."

Résumé (two pages or less) Include chronological list of workplaces with specific years at each site.

E_Boutin_Resume_2024.docx

Student Success Data 1 (SLTs or other recent data) Include Year- Please ensure that the data submitted does not contain Student Personal Identifying Information (PII).

SLTReport (12) 2021-2022.pdf

Student Success Data 2 (SLTs or other recent data) Include Year- Please ensure that the data submitted does not contain Student Personal Identifying Information (PII).

SLTReport (12) 2022-2023.pdf

Letter of Recommendation #1:

E Boutin Letter of Rec.pdf

Letter of Recommendation #2:

Letter of Recommendation for Ms. Boutin.pdf

Letter of Recommendation #3:

Recommendation_Boutin, Elise.pdf

XII. Teaching Video

You may view the *Teaching Video Guide here*: https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/awards/teaching-video-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=76d8911f_8

Add your YouTube video URL in the textbox below (Note: Your YouTube video link visibility must be "Public" so the application reviewers may view your video. Before adding your link, please send it to a friend and have them check it to make sure it is viewable.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYigDeIA1GI>

Upload the lesson plan that corresponds to teaching video here.

E_Boutin_Lesson Plan.docx

Elise H.P. Boutin

"Learn to love. Love to learn."



EXPERIENCE

Rayne High School, Rayne, La. —Teacher

JULY 2014 - PRESENT

English IV-Honors, English IV, English III-Honors, Theater,
English II, Business English, Publications

ELA Dept Head - 5 years

ELA Content Leader - 2 years

Rayne, Alive! Sponsor - 10 years

Yearbook Sponsor - 2 years

Interact Sponsor - 2 years

Cross Country Coach - 1 year

Lighthouse Team - 4 years

Rayne Catholic Elementary, Rayne, La. —Teacher

JULY 2011 - JUNE 2014

6-8 ELA & Choir Director

EDUCATION

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Lafayette, La. —

Graduate Certificate for Professional Writing

AUGUST 2023 -Current

McNeese State University, Lake Charles, La. —

Master's of Arts in Teaching

JUNE 2013 - MAY 2017

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Lafayette, La. —

Bachelor's Degree in General Studies (Journalism/Humanities)

AUGUST 2000 - MAY 2009

Editor in Chief of *The Vermilion*, SGA, Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority

SKILLS

Writing

Photography

Editing

Marketing

Google Trained

Adobe Proficient

AWARDS

Acadia Parish Teacher of the
Year 2024

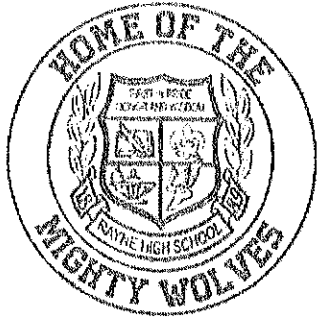
RHS Teacher of the Year 2023

Teacher of the Month (11/17;
10/22)

Top Five Contributor -
Lafayette Mom Blog (Third
Quarter 2020)

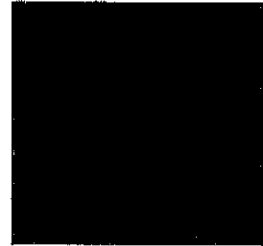
Cox Teacher of the Week 2016

UL Lafayette Outstanding
Graduate 2009



Rayne High School

PL [REDACTED]



December 20, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am thrilled today to be able to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Elise Boutin, candidate for the Louisiana Teacher of the Year. I have known and worked alongside Elise now for nearly eight years. In that time, I have had the unique opportunity to both collaborate with her as a fellow classroom teacher and to supervise her in my role as assistant principal over curriculum and instruction. I'm sure it is evident in the artifacts she has submitted that she is a wonderful teacher. However, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about Elise and why I feel she would make an excellent Louisiana Teacher of the Year.

Within the top tier of educators, there are good teachers who are very knowledgeable with their content; there are great teachers who go above and beyond to reach even the most difficult of students; and then there are teachers who help to redefine what it means to truly be an effective educator by being a force that changes the culture of their school. It is these teachers who impact their students well beyond the content they teach and who's impact and inspiration lasts long after their students leave their classroom. It is these teachers who are so well aware and tuned in to the needs and goals of their students that they bring in new opportunities to expand their students' horizons. It is these teachers who inadvertently inspire to make their colleagues better simply because they lead by example. Not only is Elise Boutin one of these teachers, and not only is she one of the best at what she does, but the force driving her to do so is an intrinsic motivation unlike that I've ever seen.

In all my years in education, I can think of few individuals who have been so dedicated to their role as an educator. In a time where many of us feel so defeated facing challenges and obstacles that most of the time feel nearly impossible to overcome, Elise approaches these scenarios with a can-do attitude and positive spirit. When others sit and say "there's no way we can...", Elise says "What if we try to..."

This frame of mind has led Elise to listen to and advocate for her students both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, she is single handedly responsible for launching and implementing our annual "Senior Fair," in which our seniors complete a semester-long project focused on either academics, career, or community service, which culminates in a schoolwide fair for our parents and community members to witness. Creating this project not only allows her students to master skills in research and presentations, but also provides exposure to real-life components to life after high school.

When students expressed interest in having another outlet for student voices to be heard, Elise resurrected our schoolwide media program, Rayne, Alive!. Not only does this avenue allow students to step up as leaders, she has created and given students opportunities to hone real-life skills in journalism, video editing and production, community outreach and fundraising, among others, that will no doubt help these students in their future endeavors.

As an individual who in her personal time enjoys the sport of running for its many benefits to the mind, body and spirit, Elise noticed there were students who shared this passion, frequently crossing paths with them during runs at the track or around town. It didn't take long for Elise to approach our administration about also resurrecting our cross-country team, which has not been active for over a decade. Elise didn't hesitate to quickly get up to speed on all of the LHSAA policies and procedures to become the coach for our student athletes to start the season.

What is truly all the more impressive, is that Elise is also a dedicated mother to four boys, taking on many active roles in their lives and extracurricular activities, and is also an involved member of the Rayne Community outside of our high school. I could go on and on about Elise Boutin, but I hope you get the picture.

Elise is a highly effective teacher in all the traditional expected areas: planning and instruction, classroom management, student engagement, discussion techniques, assessing learning, professionalism, etc. However, I feel that what truly sets her apart from all of the other candidates you may be considering is that she is truly a highly effective teacher in: student motivation and rapport, recognizing and meeting the social and emotional needs of our students, helping to find solutions to impossible tasks, and inspiring positive change in those around her.

I am so proud to call Elise my colleague and am so thankful that our school has the chance to reap the benefits from her dedication and excellence. While she achieves this level of success simply by being true to herself and not for any praise or recognition, the state of Louisiana would be proud and privileged to award this honor to Elise Boutin. She represents all you want in an educator holding this title. With that said, it is my absolute pleasure to give my highest recommendation to Elise Boutin for this year's Louisiana Teacher of the Year.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

There are certain teachers that leave lasting imprints in a student's life. They go above and beyond to create an open and welcoming environment for their students, and tend to take on more roles than just teaching a general education course. Ms. Boutin was one teacher that was always patient, compassionate, and genuinely cared about her students' academic performance, and their well-being outside of the classroom. Ms. Boutin's dedication to allowing her students to explore information that was significant in today's society led us to diving into topics like feminism, the evolution of social media, the dangers of algorithms, etc. In her classroom, everyone's voice was heard, everyone's feelings and opinions were valued and respected, and everyone was taught the importance of listening to diverse opinions. After taking her English class, I went on to take English Composition II at McNeese State University. Our goal in that class was to conduct research related to digital media. I was lucky enough to have covered several forms of digital media in Ms. Boutin's class, and was able to lead several class discussions about social media and algorithms. My professor pulled me aside as I was leaving class, and asked what professor I had previously taken for English Composition I. She was shocked to learn that I had a fantastic teacher my senior year of high school that had prepared me for the CLEP test, and her class. On top of being amazing in the classroom, Ms. Boutin poured herself into Rayne Alive, our school's publication team. She encouraged us to do anything we could dream of, and supported us every step of the way. She made us want to go to school, she made us feel safe, and she made us feel heard in a time when many of our voices were too young for adults, but too old for children. She inspired me to become an educator that pushes students to think outside of the box. I hope to create a safe and loving classroom that gives every child a feeling of home, just like she did for me.



Class of 2023



January 8, 2024

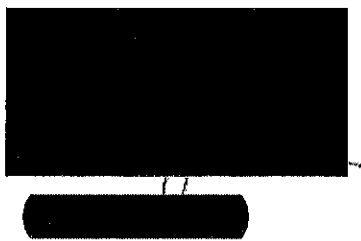
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is recommendation of Ms. Elise Boutin for Louisiana Teacher of the Year. I have known Elise Boutin since 2014 when, as Assistant Principal over Instruction and Curriculum at Rayne High School, we hired her an English teacher.

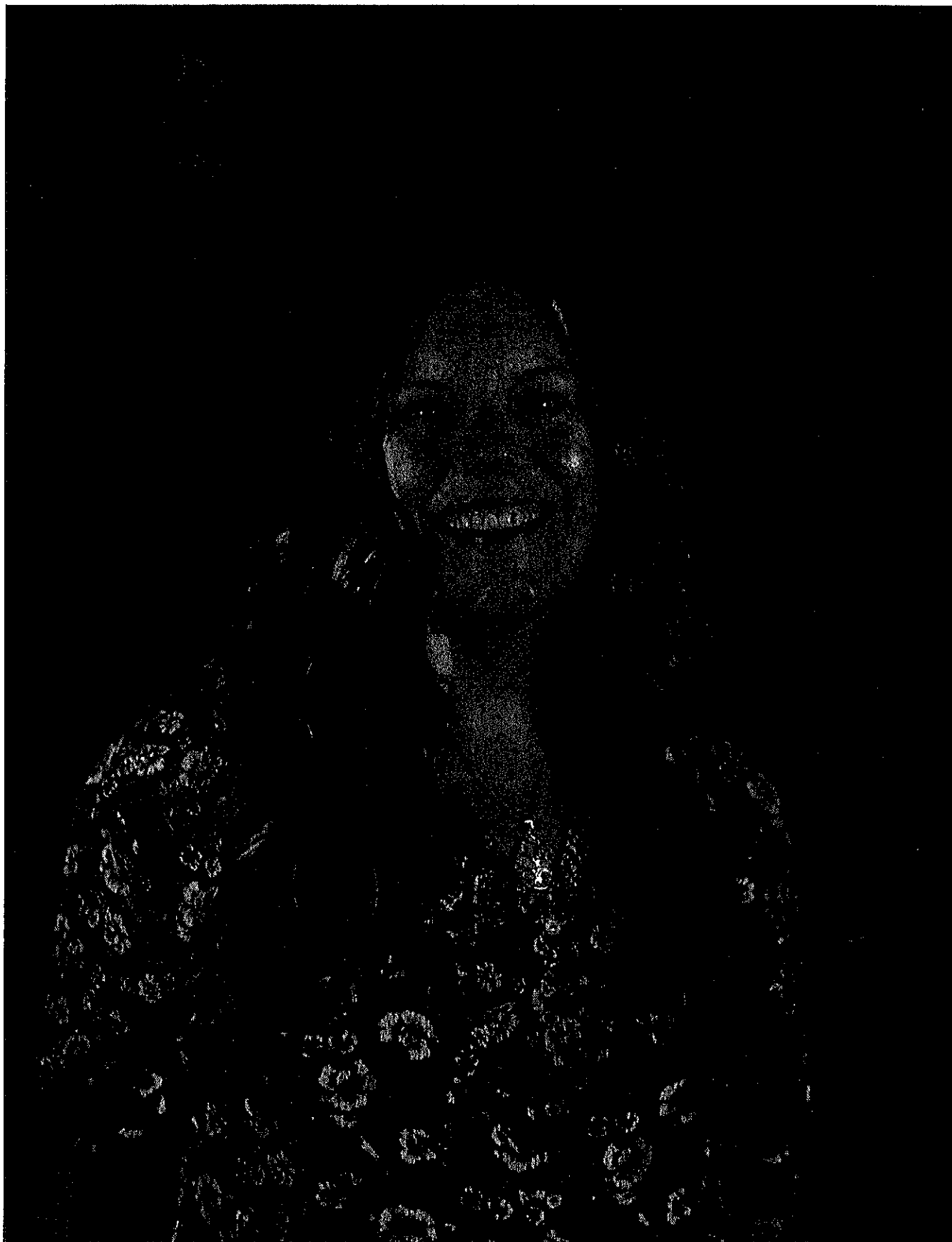
I have been fortunate to know many excellent teachers who check all the boxes: strong clear communication skills, adaptable and flexible, prepared. Elise possesses these qualities and more. Elise is what journalist and author David Brooks describes as an illuminator. When you walk away from time with her, you are inspired to open your mind and heart to new ideas and you are motivated to be the best version of yourself.

Elise is knowledgeable in her content area, not only because she is a professional who hones her craft, but because she loves literature and is an engaging storyteller in her own right. She is an artist, creating lovely paintings and engaging as an actor and musician. Grounded in her family and faith, Elise sees and values life deeply. She inspires students to self-reflect and discover their own talents and purpose. With her guidance, students extended their self-reflection, researching ways they could make a difference in the world. I recall students researching climate change, sharing changes they could make to impact the environment in a positive way and propose plans to educate others. Through her development of "Rayne Alive", Elise gave Rayne High School students a voice, a platform to celebrate their peers and share their concerns.

In closing, Elise is an excellent candidate for Louisiana Teacher of the Year. She is a master teacher, but her mastery of living life well and honoring all life is what makes her extraordinary.



Attachment: Elise-Boutin-23.jpg



2023 App Round 2: Elise H.P. Boutin

****Teacher/Principal of the Year Semifinalist Application****

****Which are you- Teacher of the Year or Principal of the Year?***

Teacher of the Year candidate

****By the end of day on Tuesday, March 26, please complete all tasks and submit.**

Written Response

Written Response One

Teacher and Principal of the Year Prompt: What are your three most unique (or "strongest") qualities as an educator/leader? How do these qualities impact your students, schools, communities and the education profession? How would you leverage these qualities to positively impact the role of State Teacher or Principal of the Year? (maximum of 750)

Add your written response in the textbox below. (750 words or less)

Are you a Liver? This is one of the first questions asked to students when they enter my classroom each year. They read a short story by an anonymous author that discusses the "Liver Philosophy," which describes how to "do what is right for yourself even if no one else gets it." They examine the text for literary elements and thematic connections and then critique the story. The next day they return and discover that I am, in fact, the author. And I am a Liver.

I explain to them how I understand how difficult it is to be vulnerable enough to share your work with others. I have students who give feedback that love the story and others who tear it to shreds. This happens for them when they submit essays they diligently work on, and I end up marking it up with suggestions. I model how my classroom is a shared experience where we learn from one another. I also reiterate that my goal is to teach them to become Livers, too—to help them find something they are willing to live and fight for.

I'm a genuinely curious person by nature. I've always been perplexed about how our personalities develop and how connections are made. I spent most of my twenties studying philosophies, cultures, and my own behavior. Part of this stemmed from my first bout of adversity when I was placed on Academic Probation from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. I failed not because I was not bright, but instead because my priorities were out of order. After losing TOPS and sitting out for two years, I returned with a fervor and landed a gig as the editor in chief for The Vermilion and graduated as an Outstanding Graduate for the College of General Studies—even though my final GPA wasn't stellar. I felt fortunate that I was able to create my own degree and study topics that were meaningful and important to my path at that moment: Communications, Arts, and Humanities.

I've never been afraid about sharing my successes and failures with others in hopes that it helps them to grow, as well. I use my collegiate hiccup as a life lesson for my high school students. I graduated high school at the top of my class and I still "failed." It serves as a warning for the Honors students and as a guiding light for those who struggle. I guess that's why one of my college companions called me "compost." She said that I could take the scraps from everything, and it makes me a stronger fertilizer to grow everything around me. It's probably one of the most unusual anecdotes I share, but it still resonates with me, and I think it's what makes me a great teacher and colleague. I utilize the negative experiences to fuel positive change.

This nurturing aspect is also what makes me a mentor. I have served as the department head for the past five years, and I make sure to provide support for our new teachers. It is crucial for teachers to not feel isolated. By taking the time to ensure that they feel comfortable with content materials, campus culture, and school procedures, it forges a firmer foundation. This not only helps with teacher retention, but also creates stronger teachers who have more to offer to our students.

I'm a bit of a medium—not a psychic—but an agency or means of doing something. I serve as the liaison between the school and the community. I use several media outlets to keep everyone informed about events going on around campus, including a Rayne High Alumni Facebook page that I started a few years ago, which now garners more than 2.2K followers. I even started an interest group to see if we can form an alumni association to support campus beautification projects and create scholarship opportunities for graduating seniors.

I love my hometown, and I love my state. If I could use my skills in any way to promote Louisiana and advocate for fellow educators, then I humbly accept the challenge. Whether it's by writing articles, attending meetings, or creating content, I think I am qualified for the call. Either way, I'm going to continue showing up each day, trying my best, and hoping that I am modeling behavior for others to do the same. I also hope that whoever reads this decides to be a Liver, too.

Video Response

Please respond to the prompt below. The video should not exceed one minute and 30 seconds. After recording the video, put into a YouTube link and add the link in the textbox below.

Teacher and Principal of the Year Prompt: What education issue are you most passionate about? In your response, tell why this issue is important to you, as well as describe any work you've done to address this issue and how this work embodies you as an educator, as well as future work you hope to accomplish. Include evidence of the impact of this work to support your response.

Add your Youtube video link in the textbox.

<https://youtu.be/ifuAYxLcHa4?si=-gTBc4MOhWFOyDuW>

Video Response Upload (optional)

Additional Uploads

If you would like to upload any additional items to your application you may do so below. This is optional. Examples could include newspaper articles, photos, videos, awards, etc.

Additional Upload 1 (optional)

Boutin Artifacts.pdf

Additional Upload 2 (optional)

EBoutinAdvocate Article.pdf

Social Media and Bio

Professional Bio Add your professional bio in the textbox below. You may use the same bio you submitted in your initial application. Your professional bio should be written in third person. (250 words or less) Please follow the guidelines outlined

here

2023 App Round 1- You may search by name for the bio you submitted in Round 1.

Elise Boutin

Professional Bio textbox

Elise H. P. Boutin is a Publications and Senior English teacher at Rayne High School in Acadia Parish. She earned a Bachelor's degree from UL Lafayette, a Master's of Art in Teaching from McNeese State University, and is currently working on a Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing. After 14 years of teaching, Boutin believes that connecting curriculum to experience is the most important aspect of teaching students to become lifelong learners.

Boutin revived the Rayne, Alive! program —a student-produced YouTube channel. Students have worked with reporters and camera crews from several Lafayette news stations. Some have even met celebrities and had them create intros for episodes. The program has built a culture on campus and helps students to recognize the opportunities that exist on campus and in the area.

Boutin started a Senior Project Fair for students to feature their capstone projects in the areas of Academics, Career, and Community Service where Community members and business owners are able to walk through the fair and meet students. She also connects high school students to community activities through sponsoring the Interact Club, which works in conjunction with the Rayne Rotary Club. Boutin also started a Cross Country team this past year. Runners participated in meets and 5ks and were welcomed by the local running community.

Students leave her classroom prepared for their next step and are ready to, "Be a Liver," a lesson that reminds you to do what is right for yourself—even if no one else gets it.

X/Twitter- Add your handle below (optional, but good to have)

Photo Uploads

Please upload a headshot and a photo of you participating in your favorite past-time/hobby. Be sure and follow the photo guidelines outlined

here

Headshot

EBoutinHeadshot.jpeg

Hobby Photo

EBoutinHobbyPic.jpeg

Candidate Consent With your consent, your photos and/or videos could be used in media (such as on the Dept.'s or Dream Teacher's social media accounts), as well as shared with others (such as your fellow semifinalists), to celebrate you as a state-level honoree. Please check the appropriate box to indicate if you consent or not. You may view the consent form [here](#).

Please check the appropriate box below.

I agree to the terms in the consent form.

Student Consent If students are included in your application, you must have a consent form on file. If you obtained a consent for a student in your initial application and still have on file, you do not need to get a new consent form. Please check the appropriate box to indicate if you have consent forms on file for all students included in your application. You may view the consent form [here](#).

Please check the appropriate box below.

I have consent forms on file for all students included in my application.

Additional Information

Your current phone number (Preferably cell, with area code. Please list with hyphens, such as, 225-342-7695.)

[REDACTED]

Your email address.

[REDACTED]

School System Name

Acadia Parish

School mailing address

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Your name as you'd like to see it in print on a certificate (include Dr., Ms., etc., if you like.)

Elise H.P. Boutin

Name Pronunciation – Please add a note for pronouncing your name (if needed) in the textbox below. Examples include- Francois ('franz-swah); Hebert (A-Bear); Soileau (swah-'low), etc.

E-lees Boo-tenh (like boudin, but with a "T" :)

Teachers- What grade(s) do you teach this year?

12th

Teachers- What subject(s) do you teach this year?

English IV & Honors, Publications

Principals- What grade(s) do you serve as the school leader this year?

If you know you will serve in a different role next year, please add role in the textbox below.

If you'd like to include a note, please add here.

2023 App Round 2: File Attachments

Additional Upload 1 (optional)

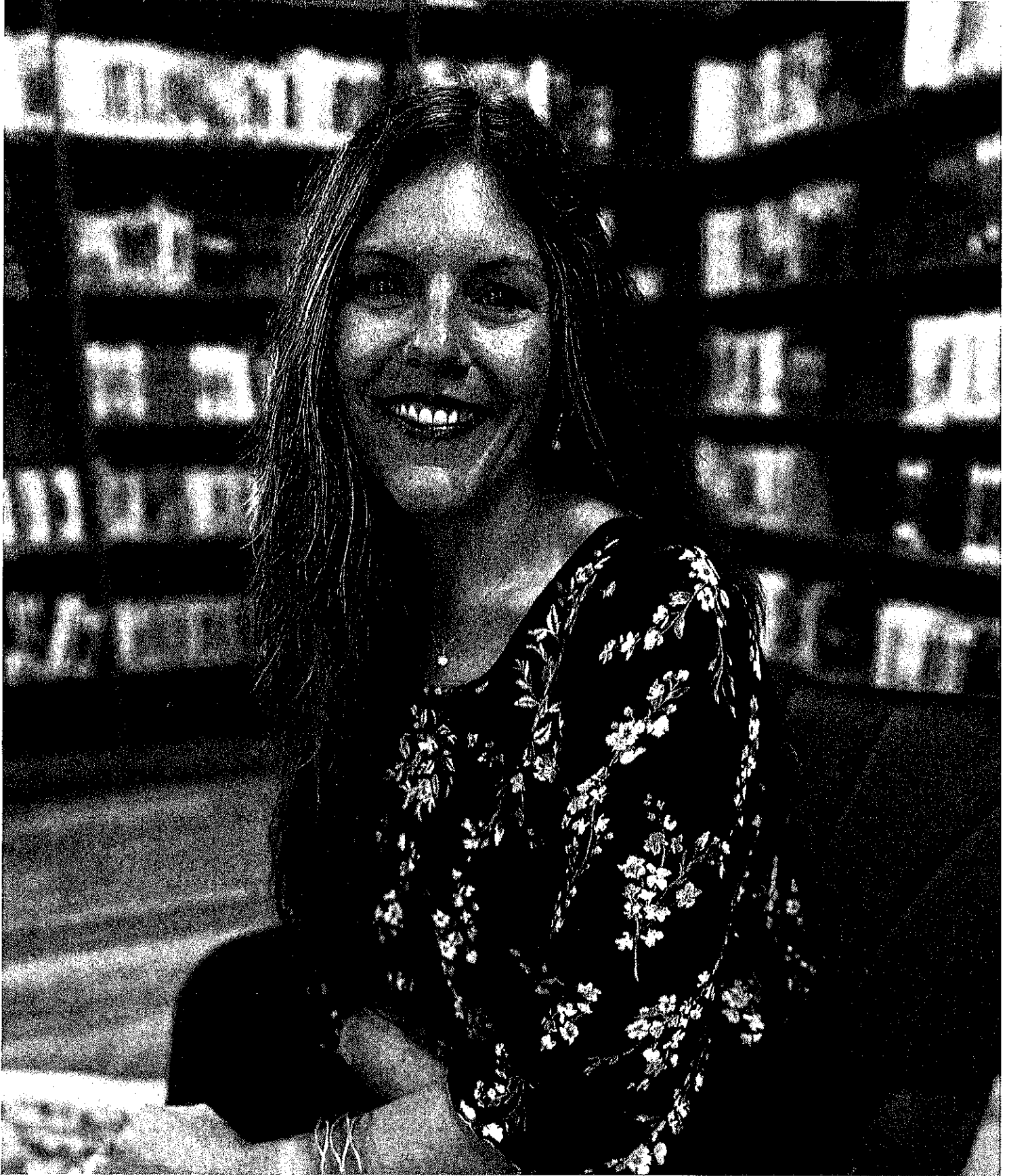
Boutin Artifacts.pdf

Additional Upload 2 (optional)

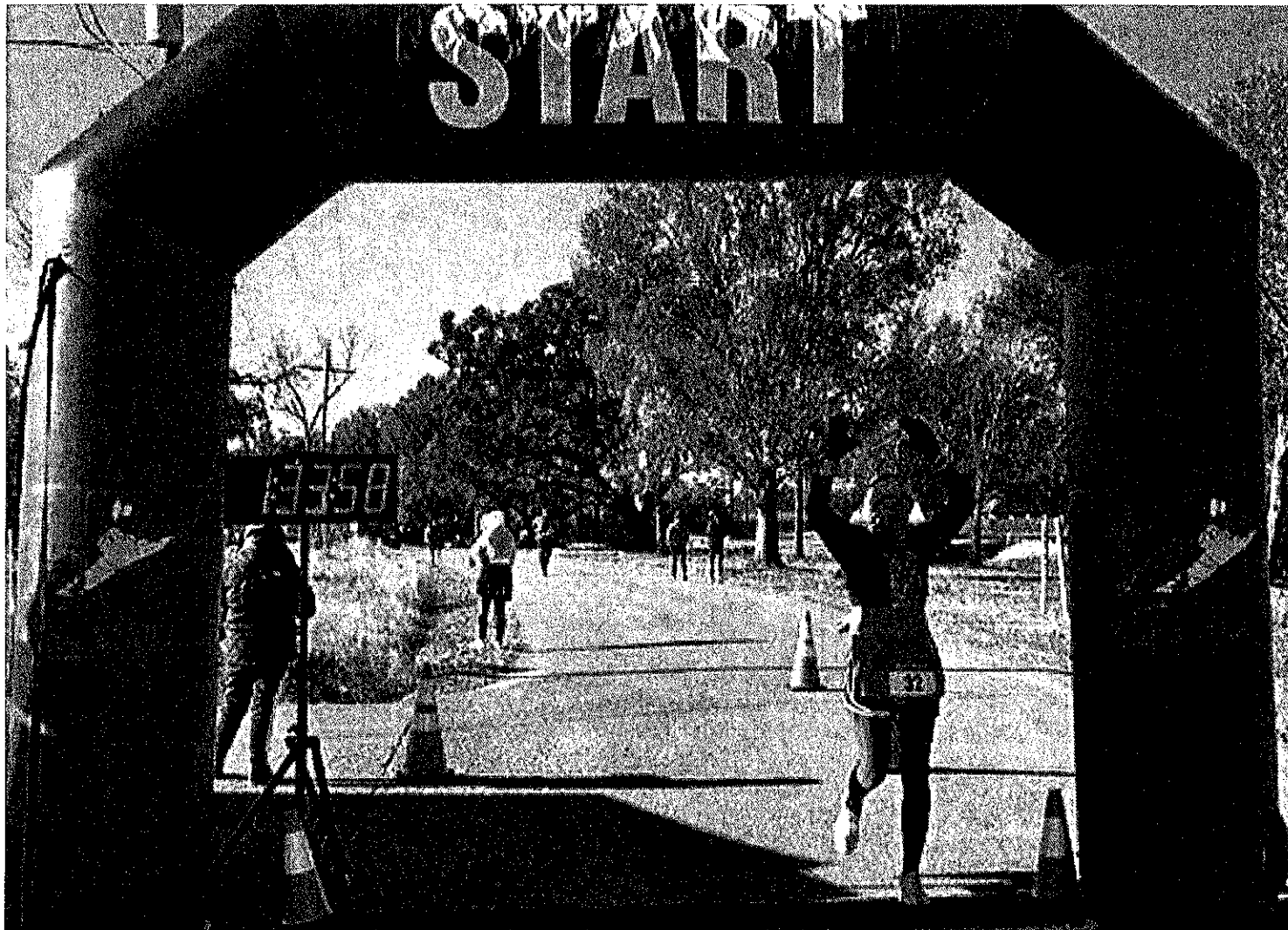
EBoutinAdvocate Article.pdf

Headshot

Attachment: EBoutinHeadshot.jpeg



Attachment: EBoutinHobbyPic.jpeg



2023 App Round 3: 64852817

2025 Teacher/Principal of the Year Finalist Tasks

Which are you- Teacher of the Year or Principal of the Year?

Teacher of the Year Finalist

School System Name

Acadia Parish School Board

Written Response Prompt

As the 2025 Louisiana Teacher or Principal of the Year, serving as the ambassador of education for Louisiana, you have been asked to give a speech to an audience of education stakeholders. What is your message? Please add your audience and speech below.

Audience- Add your audience here.

2025 Teacher Leader Summit

Add your written response here.

Mrs. McBride. Mrs. Prichard. Ms. Stelly. Ms. Broussard. Coach Garrett. Dr. Ancelet. Dr. Merriwether. Dr. Frederick. Dr. Buckman. Griff Blakewood. It sounds like I'm rattling off names like the list of socialites who attended Gatsby's parties, but like the chronicle of partygoers, this list emphasizes a critical point: Teachers impact lives.

I remember these mentors for their presence and their passion. I also remember them for seeing something particular about myself at whatever point in my journey that they met me. Whether it was the time I was a stellar student, or when I flunked out of college after making poor choices, these educators helped me to grow and pushed me to reach my potential.

Teachers are a vital part of society. I have educated lawyers, nurses, teachers, social workers, architects, musicians, technicians, parents, priests, and even funeral directors. That's right—those who help us while we're here and once we're gone. But our profession is at an impasse, and I have genuine concerns if we can't change the societal narrative of teaching to attract more educators.

For example: the Rayne, Alive! program I sponsor, which is a student-produced news program, interviews the Homecoming Court each year. One of our court members, also this year's Acadia Parish student of the year, was asked what career she wanted to pursue. She answered a teacher. In EVERY class that watched the interview, at least one person made a comment that went something like this: "She's so smart. Why would she want to be a teacher? What a waste!"

A waste?!

Not one commented on having hope for the future because there would be a qualified educator. How will we attract competent educators if this is the standard response?

It starts with teachers. Part of what I realized a few years ago was how I spoke about my profession. I often tell my students that no one else will talk highly about our school, so we can't trash talk it. The same applies for my job. If students hear me badmouth what I do, why would they respect it?

I became intentional about discussing the positives of my career. I point it out during class whenever I can. I'll often say, "This is a reason I love being a teacher." Small steps make a big impact.

Next, we need to make a direct effort to change the narrative on social media. We need to highlight more educators doing innovative projects at their schools so the general population can see that we help to foster positive change in our communities. I'd like to see a state-wide project like the Rayne, Alive! program that shares these types of stories. Schools can submit their own videos and stories to be highlighted at a state level.

I attended the Teacher Leader Summit for the first time this summer and I was floored at just how many programs and initiatives are taking place in our state. If I had no clue, then the public is equally as clueless. We need to use these networks to our advantage to show the citizens of our state that we have more hard-working, inspiring teachers than lazy, terrible ones.

I'm not one to offer complaints without trying to offer solutions. Obviously, a significant pay raise is desired to attract and retain teachers, but our budget is struggling. Let's think creatively to solve this issue. There may be other ways to fiscally help our educators. Perhaps there are more tax exemptions we could explore. Maybe we could look at consolidating the districts for health insurance, so we could fight for better rates instead of seeing annual 10% insurance hikes, which causes monthly take-home pay to reduce over time. We need more partnerships with corporations to offer real discounts for teachers. If the narrative is changed, these types of perks would be supported by the public.

We could also look outside of education majors to join our forces. I, myself, graduated in General Studies and ended up in education because someone encouraged me to do so, and now, here I am. Finding adults who are passionate about their work can lead to content strong teachers.

We can start today to change the narrative and attract the right teachers to our field. Some are simple and free to implement. Others will take a more collaborative measure. Either way, the students of Louisiana deserve their own long list of excellent educators. It starts with us to keep that list going and ends with us making the list.

Additional Uploads

Written Response Upload- You may submit additional artifacts that support your response. (Optional)

A glimpse of Rayne, Alive!.pdf

Video Response Prompt

Describe how you have been innovative as an educator. What inspired this innovation and what has been the impact of this work? (maximum 2 minute video)

Add YouTube video link here.

Additional Uploads

Video Response Upload- You may also submit additional artifacts that support your response. (optional)

Professional Bio Add your professional bio in the textbox below. You may use the same bio you submitted in your initial application. Your professional bio should be written in third person. (250 words or less) Please follow the guidelines outlined

here

Round 2 Bio

Elise H.P. Boutin

Add Bio Here

Optional Upload- If you would like to include any additional item(s) to accompany your application, such as a video, newspaper article, etc., please upload below.

Optional Upload 1

export_1684269587442.mov

Optional Upload 2

export_1704221153334.mov

Candidate Consent Please review the terms in the candidate consent form and check the appropriate box below. You may view the consent form here- here.

Checkbox

I consent to the terms in the form.

Student Consent If students/minors are included in your entry/photo(s), be sure you have a student consent form on file. You may view the consent form here- here.

Checkbox

I have student(s)/minor(s) in my entry and/or photo(s) and I have a student consent forms on file for each individual.

If you would like to include a note/message, please enter here.

Videos that are shared on our Rayne, Alive! platform feature students who signed an Internet/Press Release for Acadia Parish.

2023 App Round 1

Elise Boutin

2023 App Round 3: File Attachments

Written Response Upload- You may submit additional artifacts that support your response. (Optional)

A glimpse of Rayne, Alive!.pdf

Optional Upload 1

export_1684269587442.mov

Optional Upload 2

export_1704221153334.mov