

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

March 22, 2013

In the matter of: Nomination for the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors, CC Docket Nos. 96-45 and 97-21

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The undersigned education and library organizations are writing to you today to provide their wholehearted support for the renomination of Dr. Sheryl Abshire of Louisiana to continue her service as a school representative on the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors. During her more than three years of service on the board, Sheryl has shown herself to be an intelligent and articulate advocate for the schools and libraries community and as a real world expert on the E-Rate application process. We urge you to grant her a second term.

Dr. Abshire has a long and distinguished record in her forty plus years as an educator, serving at virtually every level in the education system and winning numerous awards for her work. Currently, Dr. Abshire serves as Chief Technology Officer for Calcasieu Parish Public Schools in Lake Charles, Louisiana, the fourth largest school district in the state and the largest employer in Calcasieu Parish. In her day-to-day role at Calcasieu, Dr. Abshire is deeply involved with all significant technology decisions by her district and has taken a leadership role in integrating technology into the district's curricula. Despite her immense responsibilities in the district, Dr. Abshire has not confined herself to local issues solely – she is Board Member of Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), a past President of the Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators, an affiliate of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and an active member of the National Education Association serving for many years on NEA's Legislative Committee. Additionally, Dr. Abshire has served for over twenty years on the Board of Directors for the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (TRLS), is the past Chairman of the TRSL, and has the responsibility for overseeing and investing the \$14 billion fund.

Just as importantly, Dr. Abshire has a deep and intimate knowledge of the E-Rate program from a district perspective, a criteria that we view as vital for this appointment to the USAC Board. Over the past fifteen years, Dr. Abshire has been responsible for overseeing her district's technology plans and E-Rate applications, managing a measured, successful build-out of her district's infrastructure. As a result of her work on E-Rate, all of the district's 2,650 classrooms have high-speed Internet connections, all of its teachers receive intensive professional development in how to use technology in the classroom, and many of its schools have made great academic strides because of careful technology interventions.

Dr. Abshire has spoken frequently about E-Rate policy at the national level. In 2005, Dr. Abshire testified before the US Senate Commerce Committee in support of legislation that would permanently exempt E-Rate and all of universal service from the Anti Deficiency Act, a priority

for all of our organizations. In 2009, Dr. Abshire provided testimony to the Commission on the role of education in the national broadband plan at a Commission convened workshop.

Finally, we must note that Dr. Abshire's prescience in technology planning helped her schools to recover rapidly from the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Rita. Using local technology funds, available as a result of savings the district realized through the E-Rate program, her district purchased and installed a natural gas-powered generator system to provide power and air conditioning to its server farm. As a result, the district email system was in operation and the district made payroll to its more than 4,000 employees days after the Hurricane inundated the parish.

We submit that Dr. Sheryl Abshire is immensely qualified to continue serving as a Board Member of USAC and urge you to nominate her to that position.

Sincerely,

American Association of School Administrators
American Library Association
Association of Education Service Agencies
Consortium for School Networking
International Society for Technology in Education
National Association of Independent Schools
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Catholic Educational Association
National Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National Rural Education Association
National School Boards Association



DR. SHERYL R. ABSHIRE
sheryl.abshire@cpsb.org

AFFILIATION: Calcasieu Parish Public Schools

TITLE: Chief Technology Officer

EDUCATION: McNeese State University

BA, Early Childhood Education, cum laude, 1972

MA, Elementary Education, summa cum laude, 1975

Educational Specialist, Administration and Supervision,
summa cum laude, 1988

University of New Orleans

Ph.D., Educational Administration and Leadership, 2007

CERTIFICATION:

Kindergarten, Grades 1-8, School Librarian, Principal, Supervisor of Instruction, School Superintendent

POSITIONS:

Calcasieu Parish School System

Chief Technology Officer, 1998 -present

Principal, Prien Lake Elementary, 1995 - 1998

Principal, Westwood Elementary, 1991- 1995

Librarian/Media Specialist: 1978 - 1990, College Oaks
Elementary, St. John Elementary, T.S. Cooley
Elementary

Second & Fourth Grade Teacher: 1973 - 1978, T.S. Cooley
Elementary, Opelousas Street Elementary

Lamar State University

Assistant Professor – Online Graduate Program - 2010 - present

McNeese State University

Visiting Instructor, EDLD 660, School Personnel Management,
2008, 2009

Instructor, Education 660, Technology for School
Administrators, 1997

Visiting Lecturer, 1990 - 1997

Instructor, Educational Technology 650, 1989
Student Teaching Supervisor, 10 years

Louisiana Tech University

Instructor, Education 489, Curriculum Enhancement with
Technology, 2001 – present; LEADTech – 2001 – present

University of Southern California at Monterey

Technology Leadership Trainer, 1998

EXTENDED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Universal Services Administrative Corporation (USAC) – Board member 2010 – present, appointed by FCC to represent the nation’s schools and libraries on ERATE matters.

Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana – Board of Trustees – 1991- present, Vice-Chair of the Board – 2010 – 2012, Chair of the Board - 2005 - 2008, Chair – Investment Committee – 2001 – 2004, 2010 - present

LACUE – Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators - President, 2004-2006, Vice President – Advocacy and Programs - 2007 – present, Program/State Awards Chair, Board of Directors

LA-CTO – Louisiana Chief Technology Officers Association – Founder and Executive Committee Chair – 2005 - present

Promethean Advisory Board - 2011 - present

Dell Platinum Advisory Board – 2009 - present

eSchool News Advisory Board – 2006 - present

Pearson Digital Learning Advisory Board – 2005 - present

Blackboard Advisory Board – 2002- present

Scholastic Administrator Advisory Board – 2002- present

Calcasieu Parish Public Library Strategic Planning Committee - 2002 - 2003

Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) -National Board of Directors and Executive Committee 2000 - 2012, Chair of the Board – 2005 – 2009, Chair of the Public Policy Committee 2000 – present

ISTE Standards and Accreditation Committee – 2004- present

ISTE National Technology Standards for School Administrators Writing Team 2000 – present

National Science Foundation (NSF) Computational Thinking Practitioners Workshop Leader, Chicago, IL, 2010

USA/UK International Exchange Technology Leadership Project Coordinator – 1996 - present

Chairman – Louisiana State Technology Advisory Commission, 1997 – 2008

Compaq Advisory Board – 1998 – 2000

Knowledge Adventure Advisory Board – 1999 - 2001

Chairman – Louisiana Dept. of Ed. Committee to Advance Technology Standards, 1998 – present

Louisiana Technology Planning Committee

ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students Connecting Curriculum and Technology Writing Team

Project Director: Cellular Telecommunications Industry of America – Panasonic Classlink Grant

Grant Administrator: Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative, Numerous EETT Grants, Calcasieu Parish Challenge Grant, Louisiana TLCF Professional Development Program, Drew Foundation - 1993-97

Program Administrator: Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund – 8(g) Grants, 1990-91, 1995-96, 1996-97

Trainer/Consultant/Grant Writer/Grant Evaluator: Coronet/MTI, AT&T, Apple Computer, Pioneer Communications, Pioneer New Media Technologies, Educational Resources, National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Lightspan Partnership, Compaq Computer, Roger Wagner Publishing, eSchool News, America Online Foundation, Mississippi Department of Education, West Virginia Department of Education, University of Oregon, Knowledge Adventure, Beaumont Foundation of America; Technology, Reading and Learning Diversity Group

Louisiana Network Information Infrastructure Steering Committee – 1994

U.S. Advisory Council for the National Information Infrastructure Sub-Committee – 1994

Louisiana Goals 2000 Commission – 1994

National Education Association – Legislative Committee – 2005- 2011, Instructional and Professional Development Committee, Professional Standards and Practices Committee - 1991 – 1999, Membership Advisory Committee – 1999 – 2005 (Co-Chair – 2002-2005)

Louisiana Association of Educators – Board of Directors, Chair - Instructional Practices Committee, Chair – Member Benefits Committee, Chair – Legislative Committee

Louisiana - Governor Edwards - Technology Task Force, Education Transition Team Task Force

Louisiana Systemic Initiatives State Program Panel

McNeese State University Teacher Education Advisory Panel

NBC/KPLC Great Expectations/Class Act Education Project Board

NTE National Advisory Committee

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS:

National Coalition for Technology in Education & Training, NCTET 2013 Community Builder Award

Louisiana Technology Council – 2012 Eward – Governor’s Technology Educator of the Year

Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance – The Edge – Educational Technology Award Winner 2010

2010 Selected as a honoree and case study for the GETideas.org Distinguished Education Leaders. Participated in WebX session and showcased on GETideas.org. – August, 2010

ISTE Public Policy Advocate of the Year – 2009

University of New Orleans- Outstanding Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership – 2008

ISTE Making It Happen Award - 2006

National Ed Tech Leader of the Year – 2003 semi-finalist

NEA – 2002 Christa McAuliffe Award

LACUE – 1999 Louisiana Computer Using Educator of the Year

McNeese State University Distinguished Alumnus Award - 1999

1999 National Principal's Leadership Academy – University of Delaware, 1993- 1994

Inductee: National Teachers Hall of Fame, 1992
Recognized by President Clinton and Secretary Riley at a White House ceremony as the first teacher inducted into the National Teachers Hall of Fame, 1993
1992 Phi Delta Kappa Award
1991 National Foundation for the Improvement of Education – Christa McAuliffe Fellow
1991 Louisiana Technology Teacher of the Year
1990 Calcasieu Parish Computer Teacher of the Year
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education Call For Innovation in Technology Practice Award
Computer Learning Foundation National Grand Prize Winner - Best Elementary Technology Lesson Plan
Broderbund Future Film Directors of America Award

CURRENT AND RECENT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION INVOLVEMENT:

Member ISTE – International Society for Technology Education, ASCD- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, CoSN – Consortium for School Networking , AERA – American Educational Research Association, LA-CTO – Louisiana Chief Technology Officers Association, LACUE – Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators, iNACOL – North American Council for Online Learning, Phi Delta Kappa, NSBA – National School Board Association Technology Leadership Network, National Staff Development Council, NSSA – National Social Science Association, TCEA – Texas Computer Using Educators Association, NEA-National Education Association, LAE-Louisiana Association of Educators, CAE-Calcasieu Association of Educators

PUBLICATIONS

- Abshire, S., Mason, D., Cumming, C.D., Abernathy, L. K. (in press 2013) Building literacy in a web 2.00 world: Popular tools and their teaching and learning applications. In M. Gura (Ed.) (2013) Technology and Literacy, Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Abshire, S. R., Cummings, C.D., Mason, D. R., Abernathy, L. K., Young, K. (2012). Pk-12 teacher use of web 2.0 tools. National Social Science Association Journal.
- Mason, D., Abernathy, K., Abshire, S., Cummings, C., & Liu, X. (2012). Evaluation of an online technology leadership master’s program. In J. Tareilo & B. Bizzell (Eds.), NCPEA handbook of virtual/online instruction and programs in educational leadership (pp. 183-207). Ypsilanti, MI: NCPEA Press. ISBN 978-1-4507-7263-1
- Mason, D.R., Abernathy, L. K., Abshire, S. R., Cummings, C.D. (2012). Advancing Leadership: Results of an Online Technology Leadership Master’s Program. National Council of Professors of Educational Administration .
- Abernathy, K., Mason, D., Cummings, C., Stephens, L., Abshire, S., & Mixon. J. (2011). Taking k-12 to the cloud: Building an online master’s program. National Social Sciences Technology Journal. Presented April 18, 2011.

- Abernathy, K., Mason, D., Abshire, S., & Cummings, C. (2011, March). *Use of e-portfolios in the Lamar University educational technology leadership online master's program*. Inter/national Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research Institute Report 2. March 18-19, 2011, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- Abernathy, K., Mason, D., Abshire, S., Cummings, C., Borel, D., Stephens, L. & Mixon, J. (March, 2011). *Using cloud computing tools for assessment and reflection*. Paper presented at the Lamar University Education Research Conference. March 24-25, 2011, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX.
- Abernathy, K., Mason, D. Cummings, C., Stephens, L., Abshire, S. & Mixon, J. (in press 2011). Taking K-12 to the Cloud: Building an Online Master's Program. *National Social Science Proceedings Journal*.
- Abernathy, K., Mason, D. Abshire, S., Cummings, C., & Mixon, J. (2011, October). *Electronic portfolios: Using web 2.0 tools to shape leadership and learning*. Paper for presentation at the NSSA Conference. October, 2011, New Orleans, LA.
- Abshire, S. (2010, August/September). Best practices - sif if you please. *EDTECH Focus on K-12*, 45-46.
- Abshire, S. (2009, March). Calcasieu technology tools: real tools, real kids, real success. *Electronic School eZine*, Retrieved from <http://www.nsba.org/SecondaryMenu/TLN/TLN/ElectronicSchooleZinePastIssues/March-2009-Electronic-School-eZine/Calcasieu-Technology-Treasures.aspx>
- Abshire, S. (2007). *The Impact of Louisiana INTECH Professional Development on Elementary School Leaders' Perceptions of Change and Student Achievement* (Doctoral dissertation, University of New Orleans).
- Abshire, S. (2004, November 1). A is for advocacy. *School CIO*, Retrieved from <http://www.schoolcio.com/showarticle/648>
- Abshire, S. (2002). Toolkit - grantwriting made easy. *School Library Journal*, Retrieved from <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA192980.html>
- Abshire, S. & Mason, D. (1992). Current events connection. *The Electronic School: Innovative Uses of Technology in Education*, September, A35-A36.
- Abshire, S. & Mason, D. (Summer 1990). Global classmates. *Telecommunications in Education News*, 1(3), 10-11.

Community Service

Former board member and presently sustainer with the Junior League of Lake Charles,
Past President of the Ivy League Garden Club

Community involvement includes the Cancer Society Show for Life, Christmas in April,
Arts Fest, Calcasieu Parish Library Advisory Board, Condea/VISTA Community
Advisory Board, Alpha Delta Pi Alumni Association Board, Women and Children's
Hospital Advisory Board, and the Calcasieu Parish Democratic Executive Committee

United Way Cabinet – Chair of the Education Division 2008 – 2010
Delegate to 1992 and 2008 Democratic Conventions