AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families

August 2026 *Issue #12*

FROM THE 2025-2026 NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

There is no doubt that our members are dedicated to the Education Committee's mission, as evidenced by the year-end reports from all 52 departments. There were many heartwarming stories of support for quality education for our children.

The year-end reports contained heartwarming stories of support for the mission, beginning with Give 10 to Education. Nearly every report described how school supplies were gathered for students. Boxes were placed at businesses, backpacks were filled with supplies, and gift cards were presented to teachers. An incredible $363,000 in donated school supplies was reported! Pennsylvania's Honorary Junior President, Aleah Rinker, chose Give 10 for her project and presented over $2,500 in gift cards for school supplies to 15 schools serving students at or below the poverty line. The Department of Connecticut supported military families by participating in the Connecticut National Guard Annual Back-to-School Bash, donating over $5,000 in school supplies.

Veterans in the Classrooms was alive and well, with nearly 500 veterans visiting classrooms to share their stories and provide Flag etiquette and flag-folding presentations. Veterans read patriotic stories to students in many schools. Students asked questions and learned about the importance of serving our country. As a show of appreciation, students presented Veterans with thank-you notes and goodie bags. In Georgia, during a Veterans Day program, one school honored the veterans by presenting "Walk the Halls of Heroes". Students waved flags and cheered as Veterans walked through the school.

Teachers and school staff members were recognized during American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week. Gift bags with lotions, inspirational notes, cookies, pizza, snacks, and a potato bar are just a few examples of how appreciation was shown. Windsor, Colorado, Unit 109 launched an Adopt-A-Teacher program and provided $600 of wish-list items to that teacher's classroom. Around the country, members volunteered in classrooms during Read Across America Day, provided mentoring help to students, and donated books to libraries on patriotic topics.

ALA education in the classroom included explaining the meaning of the poppy and reading "The Poppy Lady"; sharing the meaning of the Month of the Military Child and Purple-Up Day; distributing ALA coloring books, Pledge of Allegiance bookmarks, and Flag pins. The Department of Illinois lived out its department's theme of "Believe!" by playing Santa throughout the year, actively promoting the many facets of the Education Program

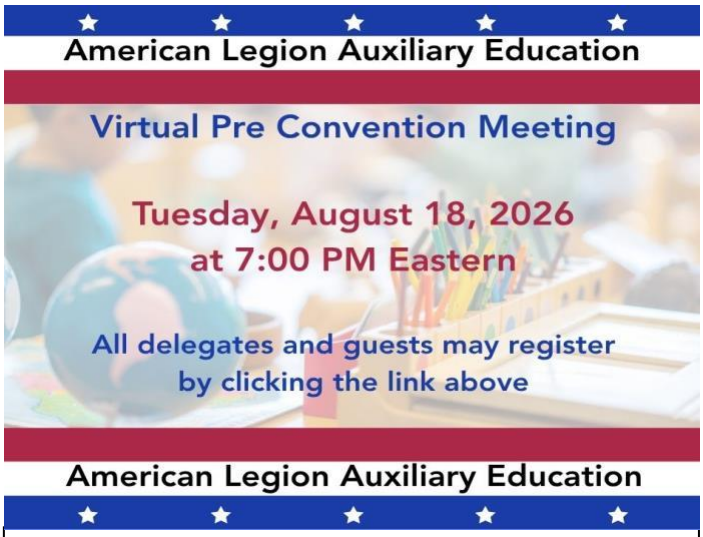
Members in Connecticut, North Dakota, and other departments reported contacting state and federal legislators regarding initiatives affecting educators.

Support for local and state scholarships was evident, with approximately $340,000 awarded to 600 students. Unit 231, Mount Carmel, PA, presented a unique scholarship to the senior finishing 31st in their class! Multiple units reported starting new scholarships, several of which were in conjunction with the American Legion Family. 1,086 national scholarship applications were received, with $153,000 being awarded to scholarship winners.

Spaghetti suppers, tailgate suppers, Taco Tuesdays, Flea Markets, and raffles were some of the creative ways units used as fundraisers for their scholarships.

George Washington said it best: "Education is the key to unlock the door to freedom."

Submitted by Barbara Washburn, National Chair



Pre Convention Meeting Registration

https://web.cvent.com/event/1fa6fa26-0934-4c00-8487-270fbe91f787/register

Thank you for all you do to support the Education Program. You make a difference to students and educators.

You are Appreciated.

COYE at 50: A Half-Century of Fighting for Our Future

This year, The American Legion's Committee on Youth Education—the COYE—marks fifty years of continuous service. Established in 1976 as a permanent subcommittee of the National Americanism Commission, the committee has served ever since as the Legion's voice on K–12 and higher education, civic literacy, and the financial well-being of students and military families.

The COYE's roots reach back to the Legion's founding. In 1919, the first national convention passed a resolution supporting the Boy Scouts of America, and by 1921 the Legion had partnered with the National Education Association to strengthen American schools—at a time when only about half of the nation's 27 million school-age children attended classes regularly. From that early conviction grew Legion-sponsored history and civics textbooks, the School Award Medal, the Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, and Boys State.

For over fifty years, the committee's record includes landmark policy resolutions, millions of dollars in scholarships awarded, and practical guides for posts in every state. Its mission, though, is unchanged: the conviction that a democracy is only as strong as the education it provides its young people.

[First in a series of articles prepared by The American Legion Magazine staff to celebrate the 50th anniversary of COYE]

GIVE 10 FOR EDUCATION

Back to School supplies are on sale now. Watch for more information on the 20th Anniversary of the **Give 10 for Education**.

Plan now to involve the community.