

IARSLCE Service Opportunity, 2018

New Orleans, the host city for the 2018 IARSLCE has an urban school system that has garnered a considerable amount of research attention in many areas since Hurricane Katrina wrought devastation on the New Orleans metroplex August 29, 2005. Many community-engaged research issues, all with strong social justice themes, exist in our host city of New Orleans: the demographics of the student population and teachers pre/post Katrina, the all district charter "experiment," Act 35 of the Louisiana legislature that fired all (NOLA's former Back middle class) teachers, the reform agenda of the Louisiana Department of Education since Katrina, and the issue of the commercialization and commodification of United States education. The state of Louisiana has also been a rich source of community-engaged inquiry in many academic fields.

To that end, the Planning Committee for the 2018 IARSLCE Conference has provide a service opportunity for attendees. In August 2016, parts of Louisiana were severely impacted by catastrophic flooding. That event has become known as the 2016 Historic Louisiana Flood. Baker, LA was one of the cities that sustained significant damage to homes, businesses and the school system. Two of the Baker City Schools District elementary schools, Baker Heights and Bakerfield, have been combined at one site as recovery efforts continued through the 2017-2018 school year. Due to displacement, the library at Baker Heights has been converted to a classroom to address the limited space. Because Bakerfield Elementary School was not able to salvage their library collection, they rely on literature books, which are not sufficient in number, to address the need of the combined schools. The library collection and resources that were once readily available at both schools now generate "wait lists" for both students and staff.

The Planning Committee is proposing that attendees consider the lack of access to books by children in Baker, Louisiana, and to further honor the urban context of this conference and be mindful that access to books and literature and literacy is a social justice issue.

We are asking attendees to bring gently used or new children's and young adults books with them to New Orleans in July. The Committee will collect books and deliver them to the City of Baker Schools in Baker, LA, after the conference. If you can donate in such a manner, we appreciate you! This avenue is an eco-friendly manner of service and speaks more to how service with urban children can be facilitated through such a temporary cultural service-learning event. If you have children and/or grandchildren who are donating, please consider adding a written note from the donor(s) explain why this is a favorite book.