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## **Media Advisory**

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### **Students Can Learn, Earn at NFCU Patriot Branch**

**Baton Rouge, La.** – It's Tuesday at Robert E. Lee High School, and a bell sounds. Students in the courtyard have shaken off the morning and pulled on backpacks and hoodies to ward off the chill. They talk about the usual "school" stuff -- girlfriends, tests they have to take and what's on the lunch menu. Some of them are even talking about their checking and savings accounts.

High school students discussing personal finance on their own time? It's a fact, now that the new Patriot Branch Neighbors Federal Credit Union (NFCU) has opened at the school. The branch is open 11 am-1 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays for the use of students and staff. And it operates like any other branch site. NFCU is the first credit union to open a branch at a Baton Rouge area high school.

Just as she does at NFCU's Perkins Road branch, Vice President and Branch Manager Cindy Dedeaux runs the Patriot Branch on campus. "We're small, but we're growing," she said. "Many of the teachers here are members, as well as a number of students. As long as they are on campus, they can bank right here. It's designed specifically for them to teach students the responsibility of saving and offer them financial services."

In addition, five students get hands-on banking experience by working as clerks at the site. They learn to handle savings transactions, since students have to be at least 18 or have a legal guardian or parent as a joint member to have a checking account. They also use skills from their accounting class: bookkeeping, account management and more.

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## **NFCU AT LEE/2**

Student workers go through intensive training in the summer. They are not paid for their work at the branch but receive school credit. In addition, students cannot access staff accounts for security reasons. Some of the student workers go on to college to pursue business degrees. Others go straight to the formal training program to work at Neighbors Federal Credit Union.

As students change classes, Ranisha Laniuex strolls in wearing a pair of All Star sneakers to do some banking. The senior likes to bank at the on-campus branch because “I really do not have time to go to the bank,” she said. “With this place right here, I can deposit my check. It’s convenient.”

Byron Sterling watches the process from a corner stool behind a computer. The senior student worker has been with the banking program since summer training and takes accounting at Lee High School. “This is helping me learn how to manage money better,” he said. “Neighbors Federal Credit Union teaches me how to do transactions, deposits and withdrawals. Now, when I finish school, I’m interested in going to college to study business management and have a banking career.”

Dedeaux said the idea for the Patriot Branch, which is named for Lee High School’s mascot, came from similar projects at Acadian area schools. “We decided we wanted to get in on the education part,” Dedeaux said. “We want to mold students to think fiscally responsible before they get out of school.”

“It’s really a great asset to the school,” said Principal Tim Jordan. “We’re able to partner in education with a wonderful institution while providing real-life experience to students and a convenience to many of us.”

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