Back to School

2014 - 2015 Diocese of Baton Rouge

Bishop Robert W. Muench welcomes administrators, teachers, priests, parents and students to the 2014 - 2015 school year.

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Superintendent Dr. Melanie B. Verges explains how educators spend their summer in professional development.

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Veronica Winchester is the Diocese of Baton Rouge’s first special education program director.

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New school year brings hope

Welcome, welcome, welcome to the 2014-2015 school year! So much revolves around this annual event. Students can experience eagerness and anticipation (as well as some apprehension) upon progressing to the next measurable step in their education and life. There is wonderment about what the new teacher(s) will be like, and about how difficult it will be to learn the advanced materials. For those enrolled in a particular school for the first time, there is the added tension about how each will cope with the situation. To administrators there is accelerated hope for the session with improved facilities and/or programs. To teachers there is optimism about the challenge. To priests there is excitement about the renewed life and energy which their school students, especially when school is in session, bring to a parish community. To parents there often is a sense of relief that others will be more directly assisting them in the development of their children.

To me personally the resumption of school brings a blessed opportunity to meet, pray and dialogue with, teach, affirm and encourage our young people. This past school year, as in previous ones, I made 28 separate visits to the Catholic high schools in our diocese (and additionally participated in all eight graduations) as well as three Catholic elementary schools (concluding my first-round visits to each of our 23 elementary schools). In the secondary schools, I celebrate the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist, visit theology/religion classrooms, counsel and eat lunch in the cafeteria with the students. At the elementary level, with the help of the Vocations Office, I celebrate Mass and have grade level discussions about vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, answering questions of the students. A frequent question I receive is, “When did I decide to study to become a bishop?” to which I respond: “Never. I studied to be a priest. Pope St. John Paul II named me a bishop and appointed me to various assignments as a bishop.”

I spend a significant amount of time in our Catholic schools to promote the life and faith of our students, and vocations of priesthood and the consecrated life. Our diocesan need for more priests and men and women religious motivates me to do what I can to support the efforts of brother priests, religious, deacons and lay faithful. I try to utilize my assigned formal training in guidance and counseling during my seminary years, and my appointments in the 28 years of service to Catholic schools as a diocesan supervisor for Christian formation, chief administrator, teacher, counselor, and chaplain (either full or part-time), and vocations director.

In a society which often is under-appreciative of the enormous contributions of the Catholic Church (and other religious and non-profit institutions and agencies) to education, hospital, other health care facilities and social services, the Church has been a leader in providing assistance for the human as well as the spiritual needs of people – members and non-members. These developments flowed from the mandate of Jesus to the original apostles and disciples, to the succeeding generations of followers, and to us to treat neighbor as Jesus himself.

Let me wish all who work in and with our schools a greeting. Let us pray that the students, with the help of their teachers and the support of their parents and grandparents, will grow in a faith that will make a difference in their lives and the lives of those around them. Let us continue to welcome, welcome, welcome back to school!

From The Bishop
Bishop Robert W. Muench

Educators spend summer in professional development

Although summer is a time for vacation, educators know that summer months can be busy for Catholic schools. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, educators have been working this summer on various projects on their individual campuses and in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office. Included in our “What We Did This Summer” essay would be data analysis, professional development and preparation for the new school year.

During the summer, data on student growth are analyzed by administrators and teachers. Faith knowledge continues to be strong in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic schools, as measured through the Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE). Likewise, Terra Nova results for grades 2-8 indicate strong academic programs in elementary and middle schools. Although ACT results for this year’s seniors will not be received until mid-August, the Class of 2013 was consistent with past years’ graduates, who scored above both state and national averages. The results of all of these assessments are reviewed by schools to for continuous improvement as part of the national accreditation process for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

From The Superintendent
Dr. Melanie B. Verges

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Assistant superintendent makes timely move

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Timing stymied Michael Miller’s attempt a year ago when he applied for the assistant superintendent’s job for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

A year later, Miller’s timing is perfect. The Dayton, Ohio transplant filled the vacancy created when former assistant superintendent Connie Urbanski left after one year.

“I’m excited,” said Miller, who spent the 2013-14 school year as principal at Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Lake Charles. “Baton Rouge is a great city and it has a very strong history of Catholic education.”

Miller’s journey to Baton Rouge has been circuitous, from his native Midwest to the remote Pacific Island of Saipan, where he met his wife while both were teaching at Mount Carmel School.

“(Saipan) was a great place to be,” Miller said of his six years on the island that is located approximately 100 miles north of Guam. “I got to experience different cultures, see different parts of the world I would have never seen.”

Miller, who has spent 21 years as a Catholic educator, has served in a variety of capacities, including the launching of St. Helen Catholic School in Georgetown, Texas, a northern suburb of Austin. The school opened in 2002 with 37 students and by 2007, when Miller left to return to his alma mater of Chaminade Julienne Catholic School in Dayton, enrollment had grown to 157.

Miller has spent 15 years as a principal, five at the secondary level and 10 at the elementary level. He has also served as director of curriculum and instruction, been involved in grant writing and fund raising and before moving to Lake Charles served as a private education consultant in Dayton.

“I’ve always worked in Catholic education,” Miller said, adding that his more than two decades of experience has broadened his educational perspective. “I’ve seen what effective leadership can do for schools, for a diocese.

“Where I’ve seen schools be successful, you need to take those pieces from that. Part of it is listening to folks, trying to find out what their needs are, relationship building. Those are things that are all very important to effective leadership.”

He also embraces the faith element that is rooted in Catholic education, saying that it is what separates parochial and public schools.

“We have great education in terms of reading, writing and arithmetic but the faith element is the piece that makes us who we are,” he said. “I could not envision sending my children to a school where they didn’t realize that faith is a part of their life every day, not just Sundays. This is a lifestyle; this is the way you live your life.”

For now, Miller is adapting to his new surroundings and coordinating specific job duties with superintendent Dr. Melanie Verges. He met all of the principals during a recent gathering in Biloxi, Miss., but also expressed the importance of site visits to complement those initial meetings.

“It’s important to see the (school) sites, where they are physically,” said Miller, who believes the physical location of a school can often have an effect on a child’s educational experience.

“I want to definitely try and serve our schools, and the needs they have,” he said. “To have an opportunity to work with a generally great superintendent is something that selfishly for my own personal growth but to also further Catholic education is something I’ve always wanted to do.”

VERGES
From page 22

Professional development for teachers and administrators included a week-long workshop on Math Vertical Teaming for grades K–8 to promote an articulated math curriculum with increased rigor and relevance. Principals and assistant principals participated in the Summer Leadership Summit in mid-June to learn about project management and the effect of professional practice on student learning utilizing visible learning research. Additionally, the Catholic Teacher Leader Cohort continued coursework within the program of studies toward a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership through Our Lady of Holy Cross College.

Besides coordination of these initiatives, the Catholic Schools Office has been busy this summer preparing for the annual Educators Gathering held the first Tuesday of August. Marking the end of summer, the gathering of approximately 1,000 educators provides a venue for professionals to come together to share, learn and recommit themselves to the ministry of Catholic education in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Such commitment to improvement is what makes our Catholic schools consistently excellent, as they fulfill the vision of Evangelizing Hearts, Educating Minds, and Embracing the Future.

We do hope that everyone has time to relax and rejuvenate during the summer, especially the educators who do incredible work with the young people in their care. We are grateful for the leadership of Bishop Robert W. Muench, who supports and celebrates the work of the schools, and to pastors and priests in our diocese, who nurture the ministry of education within their parishes. With our reliance on the Holy Spirit, great things will continue in the ministry, giving us cause to reflect and refresh as we prepare for another outstanding year for Catholic schools!

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Veronica Winchester has been on a winding path that she says has brought her back to where she always should have been — education.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge’s first special education program director comes from the small north Louisiana town of Florien. “We have one red light and sometimes it just flashes,” she said with a laugh.

“My parents always told me that I would go to college, but we never knew how we would pay for it. I would work at the plywood mill to help. But after one semester at LSU, we ran out of money and they said I had to come home.

“You can’t go back to a small town after LSU, so I joined the Army,” said this determined town after LSU, so I joined the Army,” said this determined

Winchester said she would work at the plywood mill to help. But after one semester at LSU, they ran out of money and she had to come home. “You can’t go back to a small town after LSU, so I joined the Army,” said this determined

Veronica Winchester

Winchester, who comes to the diocese from her most recent position as a diagnostician for East Baton Rouge Civil Parish Pupil Appraisal Services, said it was easy to make the decision to apply for the newly created job.

This particular job, she said, is attractive because it is an opportunity to meet the needs of special education students in conjunction with a Catholic education. “It’s exciting,” she said. “For the past five or six months, parents have been telling me that it was about time” the diocese addresses these needs.

As for her philosophy for special education students, she said, “We need to quit thinking of students with learning disabilities and think of them as children who learn differently.

“It’s about leveling the playing field. We are trying to give them equal advantages. A lot of the strategies you would use in addressing dyslexia or behavior issues like ADHD are also strategies other students could benefit from or at least not be set back by. We need to stay on the cutting edge of what good teaching looks like,” she said.

Winchester, who started the job July 1, will be based at first at Redemptorist Elementary and High School, where a career education program is already in place. Once she gets that program where the diocese wants it, she will focus on a diocesan wide program for special education.

“I will be sitting down with the task force (created last year to look at special education needs of the diocese) and learn what they have learned and review the recommendations they made,” she said. One suggestion divides the diocese into quadrants, each having three special ed classes. Winchester said she will be exploring those recommendations as well as other options so that parents can be assured that they can place their children some place where there will be a consistent opportunity to learn.

The program will focus on dys

By Barbara Chenewert
The Catholic Commentator

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- International Dyslexia Conference
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- Partners in Mission, School Advancement Conference
- Carnegie Learning Online
- ACE Principals Academy
- SDE PK/K Conference

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Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin.
Holy Family principal following his passion

By Barbara Chenevert
The Catholic Commentator

After fighting bouts with two deadly diseases, Michael Comeau says he has been given an extra chance – twice – to follow his passion of educating young people.

The new principal at Holy Family School in Port Allen understands the importance of his work. “I’m just tickled to death to have this job. My personal and professional experiences have prepared me for these challenges,” she said.

Winchester and her husband, Chad, have one son, Ethan, who attends St. Jude Elementary School. They are active in the church parish of St. Jude, where Winchester heads the hospitality committee.

derwent a stem cell transplant in 2001 for scleroderma, a chronic autoimmune disorder that can harden body organs and eventually shut them down. After recovering from that, he was diagnosed with leukemia in 2009, a disease he battled with radiation and chemotherapy for two years. “I’m good now. They say you have nine lives, I’m used two of them,” he said.

After 20 years as a teacher, administrator and coach in public school systems, Comeau brings his talent, energy and experience to the Catholic school arena, where he said it is a blessing to make faith a part of the curriculum.

Although he expects some maintenance and program issues to be looked at and possibly improved, he said, “The foundation at Holy Family is set. We are just going to move forward as a community.

“We want to get word out that Holy Family is the best kept secret on this side of the river. We provide something the community supports, wants and needs. This is not just a school, it is part of the community – both the school and the church are.”

The Georgia native attended Catholic school at St. Mary’s in his hometown of Rome, Ga., but said there was no Catholic middle or high school there so he attended public school. He went to Auburn University where he received a bachelor of science in elementary education, Northwestern State University in Natchitoches for a master’s of education in administration, Centenary College for a master’s of education in curriculum and instruction and Seton Hall University for a doctorate in administration, management and policy. He is currently working on his dissertation.

He comes to Holy Family School from the Pointe Coupee school system where he served as an assistant principal. He also worked in administration in West Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge civil parishes and said he is very familiar with the people of Port Allen.

Besides teaching, Comeau said he loves to coach. He has been a NCAA Division I women’s soccer coach at Centenary College and coached varsity and junior varsity football, soccer and softball in Florida as well as coaching at schools in Louisiana. “I think athletics adds an additional dimension to students’ lives,” he said.

His love of sports may put a crinkle in his tenure here. An avid football fan, this Auburn alumnus said his second favorite SEC team is LSU. His wife is from Bossier City and attended LSU so he is in a split family. “But I love LSU,” he said.

He hopes to have some fun at Holy Family this year having an orange and blue dress day (Auburn colors) and a purple and gold day prior to the LSU/Auburn game. “Auburn went to the championship game this year, but you have to remember that they didn’t beat LSU.”

Although he and his wife have no children of their own, he called children “God’s most precious gift.”

In his spare time, he loves the beach, reading and dabbling in some golf.

Comeau said he hopes to bring a “sense of faith,” which he developed during some difficult times, and strong leadership and vision to Holy Family. He is looking forward to working with the school faculty and staff as well as the pastor, Father David Allen and Deacon Pat Broussard, who he said were supportive and wanted to be involved in the school. “Holy Family is a family. Coming to Holy Family is like you are home,” he said.

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Daryl Glueck has spent much of his career in education roaming the sidelines as a coach, whether it was on the baseball diamond, football field or basketball court. He's confident the lessons he's learned from the athletic arena will carry over as he takes over as principal at Redemptorist High School in Baton Rouge.

"I have always believed that coaches make the best principals because there are so many similarities between running a team and running a school," said Glueck, who comes to Redemptorist after spending the past 11 years as principal at Broadmoor High School in Baton Rouge.

"We're getting a team of disparate individuals to work together toward a common goal," he said. "Good preparation leads to successful performance; things don't always go as planned – you must be able to make adjustments on the fly; small failures are inevitable – how you handle those failures determine your ultimate success; people respond differently to correction – some need to be encouraged often, while a timely, sharp word works better with others; just to name a few. Young athlete or veteran teacher, these would apply in either situation."

Glueck, an active participant in several ministries at St. Thomas More Church Parish in Baton Rouge, assumes leadership of a school that several years ago saw a significant drop in enrollment. Redemptorist is unique in that it not only offers the traditional high school curriculum but also a career education tract that addresses students with special needs.

"Over the last few years we have lost a bit of our Catholic identity (at Redemptorist)," he said. "We have a large number of non-Catholic students who presently attend our school. While these students are absolutely welcome and we are proud to call them brothers and sisters, it is incumbent on us to provide our Catholic students with proper guidance in their formation as adult Catholics while enhancing the spirituality of our non-Catholic brethren as well."

Glueck envisions a bright future at Redemptorist and admits that stabilizing the school is critical to the north Baton Rouge community. He said the balance comes in providing college-bound students with an education that will prepare them at the university level while at the same time providing vocational and technical training for students interested in learning a trade or skill to build a career.

"First we need to get the word out, contrary to public opinion, that Redemptorist High School is not only here to stay but to thrive and flourish as well," said Glueck, who earned his bachelor's degree from LSU in 1980 and his master's in education administration and supervision in 1996, also from LSU.

The best people to send that message are our students and their families, for we want them to be proud of our school and the opportunity to receive the fine Catholic education that we are offering," he said. "We will also work to tap into the large base of outstanding alumni from Redemptorist High for their guidance and support as we move to regain our past glory."

"I am absolutely convinced that if we serve our students well, meeting the needs of all who attend, and provide educational excellence in an atmosphere rich in Catholic spirituality, we will have no problem attracting students to our school."

Glueck, a member of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association Executive Committee from 2006-2012, has spent his career in the public school sector, teaching and coaching at schools in Walker and Baton Rouge. He admitted the opportunity to work in a Catholic school environment is one of the attractions of being at Redemptorist.

"The opportunity to work with students in a Catholic environment at a school that teaches Gospel values is special to me and something that I have never been able to do in my career," he said. "I am looking forward to working with students in an environment that is focused on the Gospel values of trust, love,
St. Joseph principal welcomes opportunity to come home

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

An opportunity to return to familiar surroundings as well as nurturing her own spiritual roots led to Danette Ragusa accepting the position as principal at St. Joseph School in Ponchatoula.

Ragusa is a veteran of public school systems in Ascension and Tangipahoa parishes. She spent the past five years as principal at Central Primary in Gonzales and from 2001-2008 was principal at D.C. Reeves Elementary in Ponchatoula. She also served as assistant principal at Reeves for one year preceding taking over as principal.

“Tt was a great opportunity for me to move back home and share my knowledge and faith on a daily basis with my home community,” Ragusa said. “I have grown as an instructional leader and as a parent liaison during my time at Central Primary and D.C. Reeves Elementary. I believe those experiences will help me to be a strong instructional leader and a compassionate administrator to the teachers, students and parents of our school.”

Ragusa graduated with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from LSU in 1993 and also earned her master’s degree from LSU. She earned her master’s degree Plus 30 Graduate from Southeastern Louisiana University in 2003 and certification in special education, also from SLU, this past fall.

“I believe St. Joseph presents blessings rather than challenges,” she said. “This school will allow me to share my faith on a daily basis and embrace the crucial relationship between our moral and educational responsibility as educators to our students.”

“St. Joseph is a wonderful school with a great sense of community and rigor in our educational expectations. My vision is to continue to foster these goals and provide our students with an education and atmosphere that will be a vital part of their growth into strong Catholic adults.”

Although Ragusa, a practicing Catholic, has spent the majority of her career in public schools, she said she is eagerly anticipating the transition to a Catholic school.

“I believe the biggest adjustment moving from public to Catholic schools will be the permission and expectation that we will include our Catholic beliefs into everything we do each day,” she said. “I also expect the level of strong parental involvement to be an adjustment as I move into Catholic schools. I welcome both of these changes and I believe they are two of the main reasons that Catholic schools are thriving today.”

Ragusa also spent six years in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, teaching reading, science, math, English and study skills to sixth- and seventh-grade students.

Speaking up against bullies on the bus

(CNS) — Are you afraid of the big yellow bus? Karen Klein wasn’t. Four teenage boys subjected the 68-year-old bus monitor to a barrage of horrific insults and verbal abuse that included threats to her home and internet, where it quickly went viral.

It was a difficult video for many to watch, judging from the angry public outcry that followed.

The incident put a spotlight on the perils of riding the school bus, that lumbering yellow institution used by millions of American students every year. The bus is meant to be a safe way for kids and teens to get to school, but for many it often morphs into a moving metal torture chamber.

One often hears stories about younger kids who are bullied on the school bus. But Klein’s story is proof that being older isn’t a vaccine against verbal and physical assault. Bullies can be just as vicious with teenagers, teachers, drivers and bus monitors. Their words and deeds can be just as hurtful.

If you feel like you’ve been put in the crosshairs whenever you get on the bus, you’re not alone. Every day, teenagers are subjected to verbal and physical abuse on school buses. After all, it’s a perfect place for bullies to ply their trade: People are easily cornered; the adult supervision is distracted by the real need to keep their eyes on the road; other students feel like they don’t have any power to stop the abuse.

How does one change the tradition of school-bus bullying when anti-bullying legislation, programs and efforts have not yet reached the school bus, where adult supervision is minimal?

Teens should know that, in these cases, the actions of the bystanders often make all the difference. Staying silent gives bullies opportunity to rule the roost, creating approval of the bully’s actions by default. This is what is called a “mob mentality,” says psychologist Tamara Avant of South University Savannah. Mob mentality makes it easier for bystanders to stay silent, she writes.

Speaking up when bullying is taking place breaks that spell, says the Anti-Defamation League, which recommends a “zero indifference” policy for students who see or experience bullying. Just one voice reacting immediately and telling bullies their behavior is unacceptable can break the cycle.

GLUECK ▼
from page 68

cooperation and tolerance. I’m hoping that the smaller population will allow me to have more personal contact with our students every day and discussing issues from a spiritual perspective will be a new and exciting experience for me.”
Who knew raising money could be so fun? Thomas Hugenroth found out when he decided to have a fund raiser for his school.

Hugenroth is a rising eighth-grade student at St. Thomas More School in Baton Rouge. When he ran unsuccessfully for class president he didn’t give up easy. He looked for other ways to show his leadership qualities and remembered that his school wanted to renovate the gym.

Thinking of ways to help, Hugenroth believed a fund raiser would be a great way to have fun and raise money at the same time. He thought Laser Tag might be a good choice because the function would take place off campus, making it additionally attractive to the school.

Hugenroth presented his idea to the St. Thomas More School Board. He said “It was scary at first because talking with adults I feel awkward, but when I presented, that all went away. The board members were very nice and supportive. Now I don’t feel uncomfortable talking to adults anymore.” The board was impressed and members believed he could fulfill his goal and gave Hugenroth the green light.

Now he had to advertise his “Laser Tag idea” to his peers. He made posters and sent a flyer home with each student. The school made an announcement at morning assembly. He also talked to the other students and answered any questions.

After it was over, all of Hugenroth’s hard work had paid off. The students raved about the fun they had and thanked him for hosting the night. Hugenroth raised more than $1,400 to give to the gym campaign and is looking forward to having a bigger turnout next year.

Hugenroth wants other kids not to be afraid to get out of their comfort zone. “It taught me to be more outgoing and to keep trying. My project took a lot of time and effort, but it gave me an opportunity to establish a goal and determine the steps for success.” He also wants parents to encourage their kids to get involved. “If they do, support them every step of the way, and help when necessary,” he said.

Thomas Hugenroth, left, with friend James Brock at Laser Tag night. Photo provided by St. Thomas More School
Our Lady of the Lake College student selected Newman Civic Fellow

Our Lady of the Lake College student Jeffery Green is one of more than 100 students across the country selected Newman Civic Fellows by Campus Compact. The Newman Civic Fellows Awards recognize inspiring college student leaders who are working to find solutions for challenges facing their communities.

Nominated by their college and university presidents, these students are making the most of their college experiences to better understand themselves, the root causes of social issues and effective mechanisms for creating lasting change.

Green is a student leader dedicated to civic engagement on all fronts. He has been a leader and student organizer for several Habitat for Humanity builds in North Baton Rouge for OLOL and is active with the campus Student Ambassador group. Green has helped with countless community health service projects through the Student Nurse Association and has become increasingly involved with non-profit organizations across Baton Rouge.

As the father of five children, Green is an advocate for the needs of children. His daughter was faced with many heart-health issues during her early life, and consequently Green has worked to raise funds for children’s healthcare priorities as well as for research for the kids at St. Jude’s Hospital in Memphis.

He has helped with “adopting” eight small children who attend the Respire Haiti School, a school established by a young woman from Lafayette to help indigent children and refugees in Gressier, Haiti. During this past academic year, Green has been working with the OLOL College Student Government Association to plan a weekend mission trip to Respire Haiti to assist with a future construction project.

“No matter what needs to be done, Jeff is available,” explains Phyllis Simpson, dean of student services. “In addition to all of the service he gives, Jeff has been maintaining a 4.0 GPA. It is no surprise that he was recently named a recipient of the Louisiana Breakthrough to Nursing Scholarship.”

St. Aloysius students receive KC awards

The Knights of Columbus recently sponsored their annual Substance Abuse Awareness Poster Contest which promotes awareness of the negative effects that alcohol and drug abuse have on society. St. Aloysius School sixth-grader Blake Broome placed first in the 12 to 14-year-old category of the Drug Awareness and Abuse Division, while St. Aloysius fifth-grader Olivia Hupperich placed first in the eight to 11-year-old category.

As an SAS seventh-grader last year, Anna Koonce submitted a poster entry to the 12 to 14-year-old category which won on the local, area and state levels. Repeating her performance in the division in this year’s contest, Koonce recently received recognition for her accomplishments at end-of-year eighth-grade breakfast.
WASHINGTON (CNS) — The following books are suitable for summer reading:


Royal bloodlines, brutal 10th-century Viking battles and loyal brotherhood make “Saint Magnus” an unforgettable read. The book tells of the obscure regal saint, a just, gentle and holy heir to the throne of the Orkney Islands of what is now Scotland. St. Magnus faces suffering and trial after trial seeking peace for his kingdom and forgiveness for his brother’s heart. His own forgiveness and devotion to God made Magnus a saint, this legendary story excellently told by author Susan Peek makes this story hard to put down. Ages 14 and up.


Young children use their fingers for everything: playing, acting out songs, counting and making messes. So it is quite natural for little ones to use their fingers to learn how to pray. “Praying with My Fingers,” a pint-sized board book perfect for small hands, is inspired by and credited to Pope Francis when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires. The prayer is a rhyme connecting each finger to people in a child’s life. Toddlers and parents will enjoy praying with this book together. Ages 5 and under.


“Two Little Birds” is about growing up and leaving the nest for adventure. Although there is danger on the journey, the circle of life eventually returns the birds back home. Based on the migratory experiences of orioles, the book’s beautiful illustrations, alliterations and predictive language make the story interesting and attainable for young listeners and beginning readers. Ages 4-8.

Children’s summer reading: books on saints, nature and more

See BOOKS PAGE 15B
Nearly 40 sixth graders from St. John Interparochial School in Plaquemine traveled to Washington, D.C., in the beginning of the summer to enhance their knowledge of history, politics and government, and worship at some of the nation’s most famous Catholic churches.

Four students from St. John were also selected to participate in a special wreath-laying ceremony in Arlington National Cemetery during the trip.

Grant Blanchard, Wyatt Erie, Elise Jackson and Madison Young each wrote essays applying to be part of the wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington, which commemorates the lives of the men and women lost in military service. Students also honored the service of the American military with visits to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial.

Students explored some of the most recognizable government buildings, including the U.S. Capitol, congressional buildings, foreign embassies and the National Archives. Students were also able to delve into the history of America with visits to the Washington Monument, George Washington’s Mount Vernon in Virginia, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Ford’s Theatre and The Peterson House, where President Abraham Lincoln died, as well as the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, the National Museum of Natural History and the National Air and Space Museum. Other visits included trips to the Einstein Memorial, Union Station, a ride on the Metrorail and dinner with Shrek at the Shrek the Musical dinner theatre.

Students worshipped at the National Cathedral and participated in prayer and worship at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

To round out the trip, students were able to tour the most recognizable building in America, the White House. Students got a first-hand experience of the high security surrounding the home of the president, and visited the blue room, the green room, where visitors are hosted by the First Lady, the red room, several sitting rooms and the press conference room.

This was the 24th year for the annual Washington, D.C., trip for sixth graders at St. John, organized by faculty sponsor Donna Kirkland. St. John students also have opportunities to travel to other places of interest, such as NASA in Houston, during the school year.
Parent boot camp eases transition to St. Michael High School

Do you remember your first day of high school? Many recall how grown up and mature all the older students looked and felt intimidated walking through the hallways. For many, not knowing what to expect was almost overwhelming.

Understanding that fear and realizing that the transition from middle school to high school is a big deal for students and parents alike, the St. Michael Home & School Association wanted to make that transition easier. Two years ago some of the Home & School moms spoke to several parents of current students and asked, “If you could go back, what information would you like to have known then that you know now?”

The consensus was that parents would like to have known information on four main topics: the academic and faith based curriculum at St. Michael, the resources available to their students, the on-campus activities students could participate in, and how they themselves could get involved. They also said a new parent orientation would have been beneficial for them to get familiar with the school and be able to prep their student for what lies ahead.

Thus, the idea of the New Parent Boot Camp was born. “Once eighth-grade graduation festivities were done and my child’s start at St. Michael was now a whole long summer away, I found myself wondering about all these little things like parking passes, and what he would eat in the cafeteria, and what color shirt the boys liked to wear. Of course, these were all things that we would find out soon enough, but still, I couldn’t help wondering,” said Lori Steib, president of the association.

During the past two years, New Parent Boot Camp has grown into a popular event. The Home & School Association puts together an evening where parents are welcomed to the St. Michael family, given tours through decorated halls, treated to a catered reception, and introduced to the school in four main sessions, where they are offered information and are able to ask questions. Session one of New Parent Boot Camp outlines the basis for the educational curriculum at St. Michael; parents learn about the academic standards at St. Michael, the faith based development students will receive, and what resources are available to students to help them succeed in high school.

Session two focuses on the guidance services available to students to help them with the academic and social transition to St. Michael. Session three comes in two parts. The first discusses the various student activities, what teams, clubs and organizations students can get involved in, and how important it is for students to help them succeed in high school. The second part of session three covers advancement. Parents learn about the school’s mission, what St. Michael’s plans are for future growth and how important it is for the school to continue to improve on current success. The final session concentrates on the parents themselves. Here, they’re introduced to the various parent organizations and how important they are to furthering the school’s mission and the growth and development of their own student.

“It is very important for parents to get involved,” said Steib. “A parent getting involved promotes their student getting involved, helps instill school pride in their student and helps them to become a leader. Being a part of welcoming the new families into the St. Michael fold has been a great experience for me and I think it has been an all-around positive experience for everyone involved. I am so thankful that the school administration embraced this little idea so quickly and willingly and am happy to see it turn into such a successful event.”

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St. Joseph’s Academy offers cutting-edge 3D printing

In keeping with its state-of-the-art philosophy of integrating technology across the curriculum, St. Joseph’s Academy has incorporated 3D printing into cross-curricular learning.

SJA received its first 3D printer in 2011 for use in an independent study class in electronics. Claire Luikart, a member of the SJA Technology Department and manager of the team’s special projects initiatives, recalled that the unit arrived in kit form. “At the time, there were very few printer options on the market,” Luikart said. “The students built the kit, following the instructions and learning the ropes of electronics along the way. Mistakes served as excellent teachers.”

Once assembled, the printer was ready for experimentation, and students began exploring 3D modeling. The students’ creativity and enthusiasm led Luikart to approach SJA art teacher Nicole Lane about incorporating the new technology into her lesson plans. Lane agreed, and after training, she and her students embarked upon their first project: a chess set. Using their smartphones and an app, the students scanned themselves, printed their likeness—of themselves into their students’ academic experiences,” said Principal Linda Fryoux Harvison. “We are proud to be ahead of the curve. The core technology is beginning to incorporate into their students’ academic experiences,” said Principal Linda Fryoux Harvison. “We are proud to be ahead of the curve. The core technology is beginning to branch out in new and exciting ways, finding applications in the medical, manufacturing, art and science fields. We are giving our students an unparalleled level of access to this new and emerging technology much as we did when we introduced our laptop program in the 1990s. So many schools are just now creating 1:1 learning environments; we’re taking our technology expertise into a whole new realm.”

SJA now has six 3D printers to keep up with student enthusiasm and school-wide demand. Printers are located in the art room as well as the library and a computer architecture classroom, making the technology accessible to the general student body. “The girls are given the freedom to experiment and make mistakes,” Luikart said. “We teach them the limitations, but we encourage them to push the envelope.”

Not content to limit access to SJA students, Luikart and a team of graduates and current students are sharing their expertise at events throughout the community. They demonstrated the printers’ capabilities at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum’s inaugural Engineering Day as well as its Members Only Night. Museum patrons watched the 3D printers in action as they printed student designs. They were also able to ask questions and brainstorm ideas for how their schools or organizations could collaborate with and benefit from SJA’s expertise in the field.

Then-freshman Blake Caronna was among the presenters at last spring’s Engineering Day as SJA’s expertise in the field. Future applications are being explored in the medical, manufacturing, art and science fields. We are giving our students an unparalleled level of access...
With the retirement of Sister Micha DeHart, MHS from St. John Primary in Plaquemine this school year, for the first time since the inception of St. Theresa of Avila School in Gonzales in 1959, there will be no nuns teaching or working as staff in what has now become the St. John Primary/St. Theresa Middle sister school system. Despite the regret of having Sister Micha leave after 46 years of dedication to Catholic education, a rich legacy of Catholic traditions and values remain, begun in part by Sister Micha’s order, the Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament.

When Father Arthur Lieux chose eight men to plan a drive for a new school in August of 1957, there were 860 families in the St. Theresa of Avila Church Parish who made the sacrifice of 4 percent of their weekly income to make the dream of a Catholic school in Gonzales a reality. Thanks to their foresight and dedication, St. Theresa of Avila School became a reality on Sept. 8, 1959 when 276 children attended their first day of school.

In keeping with the tradition of priests and nuns teaching and operating Catholic schools at the time, the facility was under the administration of the Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament. The first principal, Sister Maria Immaculata, was followed by Sister Rosaria, and then by Sister Bonaventure, who was described as a fireball of energy and drive, determined to make the school the best it could be.

The Catholic identity of St. John Primary and St. Theresa Middle, established from the beginning by the dedication of those who worked so hard to bring about a Catholic school in Gonzales, remains central to every aspect of the educational process. The schools are centered in SEE LEGACY PAGE 16B

The Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament have been a part of St. John Primary and St. Theresa Middle since the beginning. In this photo taken in the 1959 – 1960 school year, Sister Maria Immaculata MHS is surrounded by the twins and triplets attending the new St. Theresa of Avila School. With Sister Maria are Mark, front row, Clark and Martin Duplessis; second row from left, Robert Babin, Barbara Babin, Bob Landry, Bill Landry, Yvonne Cagnolatti and Eva Cagnolatti; back row from left, Glenda Gautreau and Brenda Gautreau. Photos provided By St. Theresa School

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**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan pro-grants, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the schools of the Diocese shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity except as permitted under said Title IX.

Finally, the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have adopted and will implement the imperatives of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as amended, and will inform parents and students of their rights under this amendment to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Our goal is to ensure that the meals are healthy, well-balanced and provide students with all the nutrients they need to succeed in school.

Students have the opportunity to choose from three entrée choices per day. Your child may purchase individual servings (Extra Sales) instead of, or in addition to, the meal offered as part of the National School Lunch Program; as long as your child has money in his/her meal account.

Now is a great time to encourage your children to continue to choose school lunch! Every school will continue to offer five components daily: meat, bread, fruit, vegetable, and milk. All of these components must meet strict limits on saturated fat and portion sizes.

Students are allowed to select three of the five components; the goal being to avoid unnecessary food waste. School lunches will meet additional standards, such as:

- Age-appropriate calorie limits
- Larger servings of vegetables and fruits (students must take at least one serving of produce)

A wider variety of vegetables, including dark green and red/orange vegetables and legumes

Welcome Back!

The Diocese of Baton Rouge Child Nutrition Program is pleased to announce that we are partnering with Holly Clegg! Holly has created healthy dishes that taste good and has a unique ability to deliver these foods in a fun and appealing way; particularly to children. We will be implementing some of her recipes throughout the school year.

We look forward to welcoming your children to the cafeterias this fall. To find out more about the Child Nutrition Program’s healthy school meals, go to our website: www.cnbr.org. To get the facts about school meals on a national level, please visit: www.traytalk.org.

Your child may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on chart below. Free and reduced meal applications are available at each school or you may apply online at: www.cnbr.org under the “Meals” or “Parent Info” tabs.

Thank you for your continued support of the Child Nutrition Program. We look forward to a wonderful school year in service to families in the Diocese of Baton Rouge!

Sincerely,

Ms. Lynda Carville
Child Nutrition Supervisor

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**FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2014-15**

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<th>Twice Month</th>
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Each additional person:
- +$7,511
- +$626
- +$313
- +$289
- +$145

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**BOOKS ▼**

From page 10B


Twelve-year-old Jewel’s life has been defined by the silence and sadness surrounding her older brother’s tragic death. Born the day her brother died, Jewel’s birthdays are marked by her parents’ sorrow. Jewel’s quiet nature is a protective shield that keeps her from getting too close to anyone. But when her aunt and uncle take Jewel in after her parents are killed in an accident, she finds her world changing in unexpected ways.

Written by journalists, the book is a compilation of real questions and answers from children about the faith, tradition and practices of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The straightforward answers, rooted in the Torah, Bible and Qur’an, will give comfort to parents and children alike. Ages 8-12.


“God Yahweh Allah” would be a welcome addition on the shelves of classrooms and homes.

---

**BUZZING▼**

From page 78

the chokehold a bully has over the insular bus environment and gather support for the victim.

If you’re too scared to speak up on the bus, don’t keep the experience to yourself. Tell the school administrators about what is going on and what you’ve witnessed. School bus drivers are not always trained to deal with bullying. A bystander is sometimes the only one who can let administrators know there is something seriously wrong on a particular bus route.

In some school districts, your voice may be the only one standing between a victim and an abuser.

What happened to Karen Klein was abhorrent. But it’s also a clarion call for teens and the parents and school districts that are supposed to support them. It’s a call to band together against the bullies that can make riding the bus such a traumatic experience.

You can make a difference. All you have to do is speak up.

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Child Nutrition Supervisor
Sacred Heart of Jesus School prepares for 85th anniversary

While a new school year is always a time for excitement with students and faculty returning to the classrooms, the 2014-15 year brings additional reason for celebration at Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge as it marks its 85th anniversary. The school will hold a special Mass on Sunday, Sept. 28, at 11 a.m., at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church. Alumni, former parents and faculty members, current families, and all school and parish friends are invited to attend the reception afterwards in the school gym. Lunch will be served, pictures, yearbooks and other memorabilia will be on display, and the school will be open for tours. Student technicians with the SHS drama troupe will be on hand to record alumni’s favorite school tales.

Later in the year, school tours will be given to all current students in conjunction with the anniversary. The school tours will be a continuation of the church tours that were so well received in 2013.

“The students loved hearing about the parish’s history and the church’s art and architecture” said art teacher Dorothy Calandro. “Now it’s time for them to learn more about our school. We want our students to be fully aware of the school’s rich history in the diocese and Baton Rouge,” said Calandro. Many of the students will create school-inspired pieces in art class this year.

Sacred Heart selects a theme for each school year, and the theme for the 2014-15 year is “Count on Me.” Principal Joanie Hutson notes the relevance of this theme for the anniversary year “since Baton Rouge has been able to count on Sacred Heart School to provide quality Catholic education since 1929.”

The logo for the theme was created by rising seventh-grader and SHS art club member Emily Reynaud and it “conveys our theme beautifully,” said Hutson. The theme is supported by a video produced, directed, filmed and edited by the drama troupe technical crew and starring Sacred Heart students. The video will be premiered at the Back-to-School afternoon for parents on Sunday, Aug. 10.

The school will also unveil the new school app the same day. The app will be available at no charge for iPhone, iPad and Android users and will connect parents to important school and student information, while potential parents can learn more about the school.

“We are so excited about the new app,” said assistant principal Jennifer Nola, “and believe it is the most efficient way to reach parents and prospective families through mobile devices.”

Sacred Heart opened its doors in the fall of 1929 under the leadership of the Sisters of St. Joseph with a commitment to quality Catholic education. Eighty-five years later, the school’s commitment is just as strong and its ties to the past remain steadfast. The school is proud of the continued presence of a Sister of St. Joseph as a second-grade teacher and proud to be educating fourth-generation students in its classrooms. SHS withstands the test of time and remains a proud ministry of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church.

DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE AS COMMITTED DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

LEGACY ▼
From page 148

Christ, from the morning prayers with the whole student body to student participation in Mass to the school-wide service and mission projects mandated at both schools.

The challenge of maintaining high standards and seeking innovative and effective teaching methods continues. St. John Primary and St. Theresa Middle students consistently score well above the national average on standardized tests and are accredited by Advanc/ED (formerly SACS).

Taking into consideration that today’s youth need to be prepared for a rapidly changing world, teachers make use of computers, large screen projections, Elmo document cameras, interactive Starboards, and iPads in their classrooms to aid instruction. The focus is not only on procedural skills but on conceptual understanding and student-centered learning. Students learn through engaging lessons with small groups, collaborative sharing and hands-on activities.

The Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament will be missed, but the legacy of their devotion to God, the Eucharist and the Catholic education of children will continue to live on at St. John Primary and St. Theresa Middle for many years to come.
Our Lady of Mercy: A community of lifelong learners

Learning is a continuous process at Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge, even for teachers.

Mercy’s pre-K and first-grade teachers recently attended the Orton-Gillingham training through the Multi-Sensory Education.

Teachers came back from five days of training with tools they could use in the classroom. It’s not uncommon at Mercy to see Early Childhood Center students writing phonemes (parts of words made up of a few letters) in the sand, standing to tap out syllables from their shoulders to their fingertips, and tracing their spelling words against a 3-dimensional grid. Every student is engaged in reading and spelling, whether they are a visual, auditory or kinesthetic learner.

“I can’t wait to put into action all I have learned,” said Mercy pre-K teacher Barbara Verrett.

In the spiritual and academic life, Mercy’s goal is for each member of the community to fulfill their God-given potential. With this end in mind, the parish and school have invested time and money in support of professional development.

Since the 2012-2013 school year, the Mercy Annual Fund has enabled faculty and staff to attend more than 50 different professional development conferences, workshops and training sessions, with the conviction prioritizing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff yields great fruit in the life of every student.

Mercy administrators believe lifelong learning is not just topical, but a paradigm.

“We believe that the more teachers learn, the more students learn,” said Claire Willis, assistant principal for academics.

“By continuing their own education, teachers can hone their craft and constantly add strategies to their ‘toolbox.’ The classroom becomes a community where teachers model an attitude of lifelong learning.”

In the past school year, every teacher, staff person and administrator at Mercy has taken advantage of an opportunity to grow professionally.

Middle school math teachers attended the National Conference for Teaching Mathematics to stay up-to-date about best practices in their content area.

All 36 teachers with Promethean Interactive White Boards in their classrooms received extensive training to utilize 21st century educational technology. Administrators also participated in the National Catholic Education Association Conference in Houston.

During the summer several faculty and staff members attend conferences like the Kagan Summer Institute in Orlando, Fla., where they learned strategies to increase student engagement and achievement.

“Mercy is a place where teachers seek to become the best educators they can be, constantly searching for new ideas and methods that will improve the students’ classroom experience and increase their learning,” principal Brian Moscona said.

“Our community is committed to giving our students the best education possible, which starts with excellent teachers who desire continuous learning and growth through high quality professional development experiences.”

When teachers grow, students grow, Mercy officials said.

Middle school social studies teacher Mandy Tuminello said a recent conference “provided tools and techniques that allowed me to engage the class. I’ve seen a boost in confidence within my students. Plus, we have a lot of fun learning!”

As each member of the Our Lady of Mercy community embraces a lifetime of learning, students and teachers can continue along their path toward heaven equipped for a life of prayer, knowledge and service.
St. Peter Chanel School embraces technology

Technology is in full force throughout the school day at St. Peter Chanel School in Paulina. Each classroom is equipped with the latest items – iPads, StarBoards and Apple TV boxes.

Apple iPads are used throughout the day to reinforce skills learned in each lesson. Students are fully engaged with great apps for all subjects. Science and social studies becomes alive through the use of videos and technology.

StarBoards will also be used to enhance the math programs. The math series allows SPC teachers and students complete online access to math books, resources, games and virtual manipulative. There are also videos to watch for daily math lessons. Online videos, games and projects are also used through the Sadlier “We Believe” religion series to help students learn about God’s great gifts.

Students in grades five through eight receiving new Google Chrome Books. Google programs are used by students for assignments in English and criterion writing, literature, as well as social studies and science projects.

Technology tools are not only used by the students at SPC, but also by their teachers. Apps, such as Pinterest, are used to enhance daily lessons. Crafts, games, songs, projects and websites are incorporated to reach all learners through diverse strategies.

St. Peter Chanel School students are excited to share what they do and learn. Check them out online at stp-chanel.org and on Facebook at St. Peter Chanel Interparochial School.

STA to offer broadcasting

St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Hammond is excited to announce a new partnership with WWL’s Deke “Big Chief” Bellavia to offer a new broadcasting elective open to sophomores, juniors and seniors.

The program is designed to teach students how to cover, report and broadcast school events and functions. This will include instruction in preparing copy for blogs, video blogs (V-Log) and audio packages. Students will be informed on the proper usage of social media, Cool Edit Pro, InDesign and other programs that are used in print, television and radio broadcast.

“The goal of the course is simply to keep all things STA front and center,” said Bellavia. “This course will assist students in knowing if these fields are something they may want to pursue as a career, as well as keeping the great things that go on at STA in the front of people’s minds.”

The course will be moderated by STA technology and advancement director Joshua Wittie, a 2000 graduate of STA. “We have several graduates of STA that are currently employed in these fields,” said Wittie. “This will give us the opportunity to involve them in giving back to STA and helping our current students with their career goals.” Some of the alumni who have agreed to help with the course are filmmaker and graphic designer Samuel Macaluso ’90, radio sports personality Allen Waddell ’03 and video producer Graham Holly ’98. Holly and Macaluso have collaborated together on projects, including the season opener for “Saturday Night Live.”

Bellavia is a 1999 graduate of LSU’s Manship School of Communications. He is the sports director at WWL Radio 870 AM/105.3 FM in New Orleans. He is the co-host of “Sports Talk” with former New Orleans Saints quarterback Bobby Hebert. The duo also hosts the pre-game radio broadcast.

BOOKS ▼

from page 15B

Quran, are accessible to elementary school students. Although the book is intended for younger readers, adults will have quite a few ah-ha moments while reading this well-organized informational book. Ages 8 and up.


The freedom and fresh air of summertime gives children many opportunities for outdoor exploration. “Mysterious Patterns” will open up their eyes to the beauty and awe of nature in a whole new way. Mannmade shapes are everywhere, but nature has its own set of often overlooked shapes. Called fractals, they can be identified on flowers, plants, rivers and even mountain ranges. Ages 4 and up.

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PK-12

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St. George summer camp offered variety of activities

“What to do?” “What to do?” Many children find themselves asking just that each summer. The answer to this question was simple, “Send them to a St. George School Summer Camp.

During the summer months, St. George was home to a wide variety of summer camps. Camps were designed to help students be creative and active and to use critical thinking skills over the summer. Camps focused on art, athletics, cheer, technology and academics.

An example of one camp was Claymation – Video Production, taught by St. George computer teacher, Richelle DeCuir and assistant Amy Jeanfreau. Using clay, students were grouped and worked together to pose tiny characters to tell a story through a 30-second film created out of clay figures. Claymation films are created using a technique called stop-motion animation.

Students crafted brightly colored clay into positions, took photos of their work, created background scenery using paper and markers, wrote an entire script and then pieced the photos together using PowerPoint software. For a 30-second video, students needed about 150 frames (pictures) strung together in the right order with captions, sound and subtitles.
Diocese of Baton Rouge
Catholic School
Instructional Leaders

Sandy Pizzolato
Ascension Catholic

Melissa Cline
Catholic Elementary of Pointe Coupee

Lisa Harvey
Catholic High

Colleen Caillet
Catholic High of Pointe Coupee

Michael Comeau
Holy Family

Tangee Daugereaux
Holy Ghost

Linda Wisinger
Mater Dolorosa

Maria Cloessner
Most Blessed Sacrament

Brian Moscona
Our Lady of Mercy

Erica Walker
Redemptorist Elementary

Daryl Glueck
Redemptorist High

Joan Hutson
Sacred Heart of Jesus

John Bennett
St. Aloysius

Cindy Ryals
St. Alphonsus

Paula Simoneaux
St. Elizabeth

Paula Fabre
St. Francis Xavier

Jack Nelson
St. George

Wendy Gilmore
St. Jean Vianney

Bernardine Legendre
St. John Elementary

Cherie Schlatre
St. John High

Kim Naquin
St. John Primary

Dannette Ragusa
St. Joseph

Linda Harvison
St. Joseph’s Academy

Karen Jakuback
St. Jude the Apostle

Ed Kavanaugh
St. Louis King of France

Ellen Lee
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Chris Musso
St. Theresa Middle

José Becerra
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