Back to School 2017
The value/values of Catholic schooling

As we prepare to open a new school year, those like us who attended Catholic school years (indeed another century!) ago have many memories of a different time and a different society. One of the words that come to my mind is dedication – the dedication of religious sisters and lay faculty who labored so sacrificially and for little financial compensation, as well as our parents who gave up some basic human amenities for the sake of their children. And for what ultimate purpose? To help us learn about our God father, son and Holy Spirit, our Catholic Church of 2000 years, God’s Holy Word (the Bible), the sacraments (celebrating Eucharist and reconciliation), the origin, meaning, purpose and destiny of our existence.

Jesus said: “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his father’s glory and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct” (Mt 16:26-27).

“God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them” (Gen 1:27). God created our predecessors and us, endowing us with the gift of self-direction (free will). Choices have consequences. The first question for us to answer is: “Who am I?” The second question to answer is: “Who is God?” The third question is: “Who is my neighbor?” The fourth question is: “How do I gain eternal life with God?”

Catholic schools represent, teach and promote the answers of these questions not only through instruction, but through personal and communal witness and support. The role of commitment to universal respect of others and the place of discipline (appropriate self-control and external order) take their rightful place.

All this said, our Catholic schools seek to be second to none in helping their students grasp the “secular” studies of language arts, mathematics, history, sciences and the role of co-curriculars including music, art and athletics. Our Catholic schools seek to educate the whole person: humanly, religiously, spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and socially.

To all as part of the Catholic schools extended community who have contributed to our personal development and well-being, and to all who minister through Catholic schools in any capacity, as well as those who enroll their children in them, I express profound gratitude and assurance of grace, providence and love to all.

Hopes for a new year

Happy New Year! is proclaimed each January as people reflect on the past and look forward to the future. Likewise, our schools celebrate a new year each August when students return from summer break. While resolutions made in January are noble, many of us are less than successful in accomplishing our intentions. Unlike the individual resolutions, however, the resolutions for improvement made in Catholic schools have structure for success because of the national accreditation process for continuous improvement. This commitment to improvement is what makes Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge consistently excellent, as they fulfill the vision of evangelizing hearts, educating minds, encouraging talent and embracing the future.

The Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE) continues to indicate that students in the diocese score above national norm in all domains and in all grades tested. High schools have adopted the Curriculum Framework for Religious Education from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Now it is time for an elementary/middle school curriculum to be developed, and we look forward to the work of the task force and collaboration with the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis in that initiative.

Academic excellence is also apparent from standardized testing, and the work of the schools to meet the challenges of the ACT Aspire standardized testing program has been tremendous. The Diocese of Baton Rouge Learning Standards for math and
**St. Jude principal returning home**

By Debbie Shelley

The Catholic Commentator

Michelle Gardiner, the incoming principal at St. Jude the Apostle School in Baton Rouge, said she looks forward to contributing her skills and talents to build upon the school’s strong efforts in providing the best experiences for its students, parents, teachers and the community.

Gardiner has dreamed of being involved in education since she was a young child, when she played the role of teacher.

She taught kindergarten as well as sixth grade in public schools in Mississippi, Arkansas and Denham Springs. She has also worked as a part-time national consultant for the program “On the Way to Success in Reading and Writing” program.

But it wasn’t until after she joined the faculty and staff as a pre-kindergarten teacher at Our Lady of Lourdes School Catholic School (OLOL) in Greenville, Mississippi in 2005 that she became involved in administration. OLOL’s principal Sister Marie Elizabeth Alspaugh encouraged Gardiner to go into administration work. She received a master’s degree in Catholic leadership and became vice-principal, then principal, of the school. She accomplished many things during her time there, including collaborating and authoring the diocesan-wide restructuring of math and science curriculum for kindergarten and for pre-k, overseeing the design and construction of a new elementary school and overseeing the fundraising and construction of a new OLOL school building as it was merged with St. Joseph Middle School/High School campus.

As principal, Gardiner professionally mentored three principals in the Diocese of Jackson.

To be an effective principal, Gardiner said one must have vision for the school and be a “hands on” leader. “I believe they should be highly effective, results-oriented, open-minded and collaborative in nature,” said Gardiner. “They should be very adaptable and practice contemplative practices in all aspects of daily interactions with all stakeholders.”

“Through the integration of Scripture, church traditions, cardinal virtues and theological virtues, the principal should be able to take an ordinary decision making situation or moral dilemma and transform it into a reflection of the Gospel values.”

She added, “I believe the principal should be a mentor to the faculty and understand their spiritual needs and provide opportunities through staff development and retreats that focus them on reflecting on their individual strengths and weaknesses, as well as confirm their commitment to the mission of the Catholic school. I recognize the importance of providing the faculty with a working environment that fosters a collaborative and enthusiastic team, which is actively involved in exploring innovative ways of improving the school.”

Gardiner believes that principals are also “blessed with the opportunity to be a spiritual leader and community.”

“I believe the vision of a Catholic school should be to help children recognize the importance of self-awareness and the role it plays in strengthening the individual, an awareness of God’s love for them, and foster within them a commitment to serve God and their community,” said Gardiner who is also looking forward to working with St. Jude pastor Father Troy Nelson.

Gardiner, a graduate of Woodlawn High School and Southeastern Louisiana University, said she is glad to be returning to Baton Rouge, where her parents and other family members live.

SEE GARDINER PAGE 4B

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**Incoming principals**

Seven Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge will open the school year with new principals.

The list includes Pat Sanguinetti at St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School in Hammond, C.J. Laird at Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge, Aimée Wiles at Redemptorist St. Gerard School in Baton Rouge, Dr. Kathleen Herpich at St. Elizabeth Interparochial School in Paincourtville, Michelle Gardiner at St. Jude the Apostle School in Baton Rouge, Cheryl Santangelo at Mater Dolorosa School in Independence and Clair Willis at Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School.

The new principals are introduced in the next several pages.
St. Elizabeth perfect fit for Herpch

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

When Dr. Kathleen Herpich first stepped into the halls of St. Elizabeth School in Paincourtville, she was greeted by a feeling of familiarity, of being comfortable. She knew immediately that was where she needed to be. So a journey that began in New Jersey, with stops in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Georgia will come to rest on the banks of Bayou Lafourche. Herpich recently accepted the position as principal at St. Elizabeth, succeeding Molly Landry.

“When you walk into a school, it’s almost like walking into a house you’re going to buy, and you got that feeling this is a good place, this is a place I could be,” said Herpich, who has a doctorate of education from Seton Hall University. “It’s hard to pinpoint that feeling but that’s what I felt when I walked into the school and into the classrooms.

“I felt like it was welcoming, it was friendly. Students were happy, you could see they were smiling, and I could see it wasn’t just because I was walking into the room with (St. Elizabeth Church administrator) Father Matthew Graham.”

Small by design, St. Elizabeth is sporting an enrollment of about 230 students. But the school’s quaintness is what this 17-year veteran administrator has found so appealing.

“In doing my dissertation for my doctorate I found that is not necessarily the size of the class but it’s the size of the school,” said Herpich, who earned her master’s degree at Montclair State University. “It’s important that everyone knows each other. The kindergarten student should be known by the eighth-grade teacher as well, not as well known as by the kindergarten teacher but at least know their name, be able to say hello to them, recognize their face.

“It goes a long way with the environment of the school and the security and the learning of the students.”

Admittedly, St. Elizabeth was not Herpich’s first choice, having originally applied to become principal at one of the Catholic high schools. However, after finishing second in that process, she said Dr. Melanie Verges, superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, called her back to gauge Herpich’s interest in St. Elizabeth.

“I had already been to the (Catholic Life Center) and liked what I saw,” she said. “When I visited the school I really liked what I saw. I felt it was exactly like what I was looking for.”

Hrepich said she is excited to maintain the enrollment and have the school adhere to a strict core curriculum, as outlined by the Catholic Schools Office but admitted that it’s far too early to speculate on what changes might be coming.

She has served as principal at Catholic schools in Lima Ohio; Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania; Philadelphia; and New Brunswick, New Jersey. She was also an adjunct professor at Holy Family University and Montclair State.

For the past year Herpich was working as an education consultant doing teacher coaching at Northstar Educational Consultant Group in Grayson, Georgia.

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Willis plans for increased expansion at Cristo Rey

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Claire Willis, an experienced Catholic school administrator and teacher, has been chosen principal of Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School. She will replace Aimee Wiley, who has accepted the principal post at Redemptorist St. Gerard School, also located in Baton Rouge.

Willis, who most recently served as the assistant principal for academics at Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge, will help guide Cristo Rey as it begins its second year of operation in Baton Rouge.

“I was very drawn to the school’s mission to provide a Catholic preparatory college experience to students who might not otherwise have that strong educational opportunity,” said Willis. A graduate of LSU with a bachelor's degree in history and English, Willis later moved to Nashville, Tennessee where she earned a master's degree in education from Vanderbilt University.

“God is her guide

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Cheryl Santangelo, new principal of Mater Dolorosa School in Independence, believes in her students, saying every student, no matter their disability, has the ability to learn.

Santangelo has spent most of her working years educating students and teachers. A 1975 graduate of Independence Girls High School, Santangelo graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University with a bachelor's degree in business education with a minor in social studies. She later received a master's degree in supervision and later principalship. She graduated from Southeastern with a Master's Plus 30 degree.

Santangelo began teaching at Valley Forge Academy in Amite. After three years she taught at Mater Dolorosa. In 1983 she began teaching in the Tangipahoa School System.


Married to her high school sweetheart, Johnnie Charles Santangelo Jr. for the past 40 years, family has always been important to Cheryl Santangelo. Her other children include Julie and Jennifer. A doting grandparent of Julie's son, Colton, and Jennifer’s triplet sons, John, Brooks, and Ryder, Santangelo loves teaching them about family traditions. She said Mater Dolorosa Church's and School's strong support of families prompted her to apply and accept the principal's position.

“I think it’s better to teach beyond the curriculum,” Santangelo said. “Making a big difference

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Laird set to lead Sacred Heart of Jesus School

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

C.J. Laird is more than just ready for his new job as principal at Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Baton Rouge. He’s also humbled.

Laird, who most recently served as principal at Redemptorist St. Gerard in Baton Rouge, said he understands the legacy and deep tradition at Sacred Heart, and he is excited to be a part of it.

“As a long time history teacher, I was obviously attracted to the history at this school and church parish,” he said.

Certainly, Sacred Heart’s past is extensive. The church parish was the first in Baton Rouge to build a school, with its charter parishioners and priests opting to build and support a school before considering the construction of a larger church. When the school was completed in September 1929, the Sisters of St. Joseph were asked to guide its direction, offering their service for many years and ultimately setting the stage for lay administrators and teachers who would continue their work in what is today the oldest diocesan parochial school in the city of Baton Rouge.

For Laird, knowing that his history is important as it helps him understand his role in fostering and continuing Sacred Heart’s legacy.

Laird, a native of Texas, graduated from Florida State University before returning to the Lone Star State and attending Lamar University for a master’s degree in educational administration. He and his wife, Danielle, who is from Baton Rouge, lived in Houston for several years, where they both worked as teachers.

In 2014, with their young family growing, the couple decided to move back to Danielle’s hometown and plant roots in Baton Rouge.

Soon, Laird began teaching at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, and last fall, he was tapped for the top post at Redemptorist St. Gerard.

An adult convert to Catholicism, Laird said he has a deep appreciation for Sacred Heart’s commitment to Catholic education and its faith-based teaching.

He also noted great value in the school’s strong academic record and offered a personal observation on why Sacred Heart’s small class size is an asset.

Laird said while living in Houston, he taught in a large high school that served some 4,600 students. The classes were large, and while the best and worst kids were always recognizable, some students simply got lost, he stated.

“In a big school, if a kid wants to be invisible, they can be. But it’s hard for that to happen at a small school. Instead teachers and staff go out of their way to get to know each child, and that’s huge for me. I believe it’s important that every child knows they are loved and cared for by God,” he said.

SEE LAIRD PAGE 7B
Revisions to a long-standing federal program has undergone a series of name changes will provide more equitable funding to private and Catholic schools as well as a state ombudsman to ensure those dollars are being channeled to the appropriate coffers, according to an official with the U.S. Department of Education.

During a meeting of Catholic educators earlier this year at the Catholic Life Center, Jenah Morrisey, management and program analyst for the Department of Education's Office of Non-private Schools, said the most recent updates to the No Child Left Behind Act signed in nearly 15 years ago has reauthorized the protection act for secondary and elementary schools.

Renamed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Morrisey said the changes, which go into effect for the 2017-18 school year, provide equitable services to private school students and teachers. “Equitable services is the key phrase,” Morrisey said, adding that the changes will affect all or some parts of Title I, Title 2 and Title 4 programs.

“I would not say there are drastic changes, but there are some important additions to the law,” Morrisey told The Catholic Commentator. “One of the bigger ones is states are now required to designate an ombudsman (at the state level) to monitor funding allocated to private schools. They will be monitoring the districts and not the schools but will be a resource to the private schools if they have questions to help resolve issues.”

Morrisey noted there will also be some changes to the way public school districts will be required to allocate Title I funding. Previously, public school districts were able to allocate Title I funding to private schools. However, under ESSA, the districts will be required to allocate Title I funding to public schools for certain programs and proportion to the public schools what was left.

“That resulted in lower per pupil allocation,” Morrisey said. “Now they will not be able to take off the reservations. It’s a big change and it will alter funding amounts for both the public and private schools. The funding is a little more straightforward.

“I think in some regards the change in funding is big,” she added. “With Title I those reservations could take a big chunk. That is no longer the case.”

Because of the changes, both the teachers and students could potentially see an increase in services because of the sharing of funds.

One Catholic school educator in Ascension civil parish said the changes will allow students struggling in areas such as math and reading additional one-on-one tutoring attention they need during the school day, calling it a “big benefit.”

“They will also be able to get counseling services through the school,” said Dianne Talbot, instructional specialist for the Catholic Schools Office. “(The counseling) will be whatever a particular counselor is allowed to do with his or her qualifications.”

According to officials, the ESSA Act should help clear up confusion in the classroom regarding eligibility of Title I services. In any particular classroom, two students who are Title I eligible might be sitting next to each other but because of the way a particular public school district is structured, one of the students might be eligible for services because of the sharing of funds.

Jenah Morrisey, management and program analyst for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Non-private Schools explains revisions to a long-standing federal program during a presentation to Catholic educators at the Catholic Life Center earlier this year. The changes should provide more equitable funding to private and Catholic schools. Photo by Richard Meek | The Catholic Commentator

LAIRD

From page 6B

As he prepares for the new school year, Laird said a key element of his management style is listening. Taking cues from his own experience and from administrators who he believes have mentored him, including Lisa Harvey, principal at Catholic High School, Laird said he believes listening and “trying to be aware of what people need” is one of his strengths.

“My door is always open,” he said, adding that he strives to learn where his students are and what they need.

According to Laird, students come to Sacred Heart from 21 different zip codes in and around Baton Rouge, and as they drive from “near and far,” he said, it’s a testament to the school’s strong dynamic tradition.

But while Sacred Heart no longer draws students from around the neighborhood, the school’s new principal sees a bright future for the area.

“Look at the development on Government Street I’m also seeing investment on Florida Boulevard which is key since the parish backs up to it. It’s all ripe to blossom,” he said.

Laird believes the parish and school can play a pivotal part in the neighborhood’s revitalization.

“We have a strong mission here. We can be the cornerstone to move the area in a positive way,” he said, adding, “We can be a beacon for the rejuvenation of this neighborhood.”

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St. Jude the Apostle

**Paula Johnson**
St. Louis King of France

**Ellen Lee**
The Archangel High

**Paula Poche**
St. Peter Chanel

**Chris Musso**
St. Theresa Middle

**Dr. Charles (Pat) Sanguinetti**
St. Thomas Aquinas High

**Dr. Judy Armstrong**
Blessed Margaret of Castello
REACH Program
Ready, set, save

By Ann M. Bare
Special to The Catholic Commentator

The smell of a box of crayons and the scent of ink in a recently opened box of spiral notebooks stir up childhood memories. Add sharpened #2 pencils and a pink eraser, a zippered pencil case, a bottle of glue, a pair of scissors and a wooden ruler and we were ready for school. That was then; this is now.

Back-to-school lists these days include a box of tissues, a bottle of hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes, folders, notebooks, binders, a ream of copy paper, colored pencils, washable markers, erasers, gym shoes, locker organizers and possibly a laptop. Are you kidding? Guess what the kids are getting for Christmas — nine months before they’re actually going to use them. Oh, and don’t forget the backpack.

Getting kids ready for school can push one to apply for a second mortgage — or, wait, you just did that last year. Planning ahead and watching for sales can decrease the financial outflow in August — especially if there are several children heading off to classrooms.

When our young’uns (or even high schoolers) are gathering everything for the first day of the school year, there’s an innate need to start them out with new everything. Maybe that’s because we enjoyed our book bag of fresh-smelling items years ago. We think that some memories need to be stored in the reservoir of our kids’ minds.

But do they really need ALL new items? If the money isn’t there this year, perhaps a few healthy leftovers can sneak into last year’s spruced-up backpack. After a week, everything is “used” anyway, so maybe last year’s ruler, a decorated box with last year’s crayons and markers, stacks of loose leaf paper, and some gently used folders with new stickers can meet the immediate need. The class won’t use 25 boxes of tissues, 25 bottles of sanitizer and 25 cartons of wipes the first week; putting off those purchases for a while can put a little cushion on the budget. (Just tell the teacher your provisions will come later.)

College freshmen’s expenses are even more shocking — towels, sheets, small fridge, iron, laundry soap and dryer sheets, medications, personal items, cell phone, overpriced textbooks, spending money and new clothes. (Gotta have new...)

FLOOD DONATION – Callie Polozola, center, a member of the Baton Rouge Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, presents a donation on behalf of her group to Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School recently. The local council of Catholic women wanted to help the school which was affected by the August flooding. Polozola is pictured with Kendall Hebert, Cristo Rey director of community relations and chief of staff, left, and Sister Catherine Luu, a Cristo Rey faculty member and Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady representative. Photo provided by Kendall Hebert | Cristo Rey High School

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been hiring new faculty members and looking at ways to enhance the delivery of instruction for our students," said Willis, who as someone who focused on curriculum development and high academic standards as an assistant principal, also added that she will continue to concentrate on that passion in her new post.

In addition, Willis said since accepting her position, she has been connecting with other school leaders in the Cristo Rey Network, which comprises 32 schools nationwide.

But while preparing for the new school year is important, there are other goals Willis wants to achieve at Cristo Rey, and one involves making sure more people in the community know about the mission and purpose of the school.

“I want to raise awareness of the great work going on at Cristo Rey,” said Willis, explaining that the school’s focus of empowering students and families from low-economic areas through education and a work study experience also fits well within the social justice concerns of the Catholic church.

“It’s very much in line with what Pope Francis wants us to do,” she said.

Willis remarked students and their families appreciate the opportunity they have for a brighter future through Cristo Rey, and the entire school community is grateful for the support others give through donations, volunteer work and prayers.

“Our families deserve to be a part of this,” she said, emphasizing, “There’s great work happening here.”

ESSAY WINNER – Lester Pourciau, left, president of The United Men of St. Francis Xavier Church presents the award to eighth-grade graduate Braylyn Stewart, winner of the “What My Catholic Education Means to Me” essay contest, sponsored by the club. Stewart will attend Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School in the fall. Also pictured is principal Paula Fabre. Photos provided by Paula Fabre | St. Francis Xavier School

THE LEGISLATURE – St. Francis Xavier School youth legislature participants are, from left, Danielle Cephas, Alana Buckley, Ceondre Herbert and sponsor and teacher Paulette Hamilton.
Our Lady of Mercy breaks ground for building

The confetti flew, dirt turned, and holy water was sprinkled by Bishop Robert W. Meunch as Our Lady of Mercy School in Baton Rouge celebrated the ground breaking of the new expansion on its lower school campus. As students, teachers and families sang songs in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, OLOM pastor Father Cleo Milano recalled the humble beginnings of the school in 1953. The school opened in September of that year with 174 students in grades one through four. Fast forward 64 years from those first school years when a temporary building and a Scout Hut were being utilized for classroom space, Our Lady of Mercy is preparing for an expansion that will accommodate its now 950-plus students with a state-of-the-art Early Childhood Center on the lower school campus.

The expanded and renovated facility will be the new home for Mercy’s 5-year-old “Little Saints” pre-kindergarten program through second grade. The expansion of the lower school will increase grade level sections allowing for an average student-teacher ratio of 25 or less students in each classroom. Students and faculty thrive in these smaller classes and achieve their greatest potential. Having the lower school separate from the upper school also helps Mercy maintain the intimate, personal and family feeling that is one of its hallmarks.

In the fall of 2015, Mercy completed a nine-month master planning process with the Center of Planning Excellence (CPEX) that generated a 20-year master plan for the church and school. A feasibility planning study was then conducted which resulted in the decision to launch a capital campaign to accommodate the growth of the church and school.

With much anticipation, the first phase of the Mercy building campaign, Traditions for Tomorrow, is now in action. Mercy broke ground in May with a community-wide celebration complete with a solemn blessing of the site from Bishop Meunch and hard hats for kids. The new building designed by Coleman Partners Architects will provide a self-contained facility for the school’s youngest Blue Jays. The new Early Childhood Center will include its own library and media center (separate from the main campus); cafeteria; nurse’s station; counselor’s office; and an expanded common space that will be utilized for morning assembly, prayer and group gatherings.

Arkell Constructors was recently selected as the general contractors for this first building project. Construction is scheduled over the next 10 months with an anticipated completion date in May. On the

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- 1:1 Chromebook program 5th–12th grade

We are a nondiscretionary school in accordance with Title IX of the Civil Act of 1964
SMHS shares with other schools

St. Michael High School in Baton Rouge implemented a 1:1 technology initiative four years ago, with each student receiving a Fujitsu tablet PC to use for all of their classes. The computers are on a four-year rotation, and with new ones coming in for the 2017-18 school year, administration decided to donate more than 150 computers to other schools for their students to use. SMHS technology integration specialist Abby Tate commented, “These computers were so beneficial to our students that it is great to see that they can continue to be used in classroom settings. For those students in lower grades, it will provide them with the experience and tools they need in order to be prepared for high school.”

Students working on the SMHS help desk have preparing the computers for donation. St. Jean Vi-
St. George students learn life lessons through D.A.R.E. program

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is a program to help fifth-grade students resist the pressure which may influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In this program, the students are introduced to the D.A.R.E. Decision Making Model that assists them in problem solving, being a good citizen and making wise decisions. To graduate and earn a certificate the students are expected to maintain good attendance, demonstrate good behavior during the class by following the D.A.R.E. rules, keep their body free of drugs, complete the student workbook and write a D.A.R.E. report. The science-based D.A.R.E. curriculum and materials are used during the D.A.R.E. class.

St. George School’s D.A.R.E. Officer is Captain Randy Aguillard, Commander of D.A.R.E., Junior Deputies and Neighborhood Watch. He has been teaching D.A.R.E. for 22 years and 21 of those years have been at St. George School in Baton Rouge. Aguillard is a kind-hearted, compassionate man who loves interacting with the students and helping them develop the ability to make good choices, which makes him a good role model for students inside and outside of the classroom and a strong advocate for the D.A.R.E. program. Aguillard is also an active member in his parish, St. Jude Church in Baton Rouge, a crisis negotiator, member of Honor Guard and part of the LA D.A.R.E. training staff. He shares and uses personal life experiences to clarify how the D.A.R.E. program is useful both in school and family settings.

NOPE from page 12B

about who I’m going to hang out with. Yep!
Now I have to buy only what I can afford (“budget” is not a four-letter word). Yep! Yep! Yep!
Shoot, I overslept. Oh no!
My credit card bill can’t be this high! Oh no!

Where am I and how did I get here? Oh no!
My folks are going to kill me when they see my grades! Oh no!
College years have enough routine stress without adding irresponsible drama/trauma. Making decisions because it’s the right thing to do (rather than because Mom or Dad said so) starts leveling out your life of dependability, integrity and trustworthiness, virtually guaranteeing long-lasting friendships and worthwhile employment and, doggone it, people will like you. More importantly, you’ll like yourself.

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St. George School in Baton Rouge.
Aguillard is a kind-hearted, compassionate man who loves interacting with the students and helping them develop the ability to make good choices, which makes him a good role model for students inside and outside of the classroom and a strong advocate for the D.A.R.E. program. Aguillard is also an active member in his parish, St. Jude Church in Baton Rouge, a crisis negotiator, member of Honor Guard and part of the LA D.A.R.E. training staff. He shares and uses personal life experiences to clarify how the D.A.R.E. program is useful both in school and family settings.

WARRIOR ALUMNI HONORED – Past graduates and long-time volunteers at St. Michael the Archangel High School in Baton Rouge were recently honored. From left, Jason and Katey McCann received the 2017 Alumni of the Year Awards, while parent volunteer Kristy Larson and Father Brad Doyle, parochial vicar for St. James Church in St. James and St. Philip Church and Our Lady of Peace Church, both in Vacherie, were presented with the school’s 2017 Warrior Sword Awards. Others honored at the annual Warrior Awards Dinner were 2017 Wall of Honor Athletes Josh Fontenot, a 1998 graduate of St. Michael I and a wrestling and football standout, and James Meyers, a 2007 school graduate and five-time state swim champion. Photo provided by Kristi Watts | St. Michael the Archangel High School
SJA continues emphasis on STEM, innovation and design

St. Joseph’s Academy, in Baton Rouge, will begin the 2017-2018 academic year with a continued emphasis on providing young women with the tools they need to succeed on the college level and beyond.

To address the traditional under-representation of women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, SJA will offer even more cross-curricular, hands-on learning opportunities in the Andrea Clesi McMa-kin’74 STEM Lab. Since opening in June of 2015, the lab has provided students with access to 20 3D printers, laser cutters, arduinos and a variety of electronic devices. The lab is filled every hour with engineering students as well as those from other disciplines wanting to utilize the state-of-the-art tools.

SJA was among the first schools in the country to have 3D printers; having 20 is unprecedented on the high school level. The printers and other tools enable students to design and build projects they can use in class. As a result, students are learning concepts, then putting those concepts into practice in the lab.

To further integrate the success of the STEM Lab across the curriculum, SJA opened the 2016-2017 school year with a state-of-the-art Innovation and Design Lab. A year later, the lab will continue to offer cutting-edge, project-based learning to equip young women with 21st-century skills, including critical-thinking, collaboration, creating and problem-solving.

The Innovation and Design Lab serves as the link between the STEM Lab and the global community, teaching students the six-step engineering and design methodology – identify, interpret, ideate, invent, implement and improve – to help them creatively design solutions to real-world problems.

Students gather and focus information, imagine the possibilities, design a prototype, then build and deliver it. They identify a problem, develop empathy, brainstorm ideas for solutions and design an activity or object to help solve the problem. The Innovation and Design model emphasizes the process and problem solving. Failure and the resulting re-thinking are crucial components of the model, resulting in curiosity, empathy, creativity and collaboration.

Evidence of the impact of the STEM and Innovation and Design labs can be found in the success enjoyed by SJA students in a variety of science fair competitions. SJA was the top school in the 2017 Region VII Louisiana Science and Engineering Fair and finished first in the 2017 Louisiana State Science and Engineering Fair. As the result of their strong original research projects, many students were invited to participate in national and international science competitions. Indeed, more SJA students secured invitations in 2016-2017 than in any previous years.

Participants finished first, second and fifth at this year’s Louisiana Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. Three students advanced to participate in the National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, and an unprecedented seven students were invited to participate in the 2017 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

At the International Sustainable World Energy, Engineering and Environment Project Olympiad in Houston, all four participants brought home awards, including a silver medal, two bronze medals and an honorable mention. Both participants in the recent GENIUS Olympiad won silver medals.

“The STEM Lab, Innovation and Design Lab and Science Fair provide our girls with invaluable learning experiences at the high school level,” said Linda Messina, SJA’s Science Fair coordinator. “They are able to create and design in the innovation and design lab, and then develop statistical skills, analysis and critical-thinking skills through STEM. This invariably leads to success in college and in their careers.”

Messina said that as the result of their exposure to STEM-centric learning opportunities, a vastly increased number of SJA students are pursuing engineering degrees and careers. “The students design their own experimental procedures, sometimes with the help of college professors who serve as mentors, and they are very innovative and on the cutting edge of current technology with real-world applications,” she said.
Reflective garden offers students to spend time with Mary

Sacred Heart of Jesus School students will journey toward a more intimate relationship with the mother of Jesus during the 2017-18 school year through a “Meditations with Mary” in a beautiful new prayer garden and courtyard. The prayer garden, dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 24, is located on the east side of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Baton Rouge.

Students will visit the prayer garden at least once a month for private reflections and other activities.

“Meditations with Mary” is a wonderful opportunity for our students and will help them connect with our heavenly Mother in a new way,” said junior high religion teacher Amy Fauveaux. Fauveaux is planning a number of activities for “Meditations,” including praying the rosary, reading passages about Mary and having the students write prayers or poems to Mary that will be read at the prayer garden.

Second- through fifth-grade religion teacher Lisa Lively is also excited about the opportunities that ‘Meditations with Mary’ will offer the students. “The role of a mother is so important in the life of a child and Mary is such an important part of our Catholic faith,” said Lively.

“I’m hoping to make a connection for the younger students between Mary and her role as a spiritual mother in their faith life. ‘Meditations with Mary’ will be a perfect opportunity to form and foster this relationship with Mary as their spiritual mother."

Sacred Heart religion teacher Linda Rizzo loves using outdoor space for her students. “It’s so important to get the students outside to be surrounded by God’s work,” she said.

Rizzo uses the outdoor Stations of the Cross on the school grounds weekly during Lent and they also visit the statue of Mary located on the school yard. “The new courtyard will be the perfect intimate space for the children to spend quiet time with Mary.”

Religion coordinator Lori Tomecek plans to incorporate use of the courtyard into the eighth grade “Come, Lord Jesus” program. Eighth-graders have a fall retreat, along with 12 weeks of “Come Lord Jesus” in small groups.

“We’ll definitely find time for our eighth-graders to spend time with Mary during some of these events,” said Tomecek.

ESSA

while the other student might not be, depending on their residence. Because Catholic schools attract from a number of areas, students often cross public school district boundaries, which is at the root of the confusion.

Talbot said the amount of funding the school receives is based on what school the student would attend if they were going to a public school.

“Each student has a different funding rate,” she said. “We pool our funding and that’s how we get a total dollar value.

“If we have more funds and make good decision for use of those funds, make it student centric decision making, we will have more money to spend and the hopeful outcome will have even better results. If it follows that through training and awareness, we have better practice, then that would be the case.”

ESSA is an outgrowth of the Elementary Secondary Act originally passed in 1965, which was then updated to the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002.

Sacred Heart of Jesus School first-graders spend reflective time with Mary during recess this past school year. This year ‘Meditations with Mary’ is being added to the religion curriculum and students will make regular visits to the new Sacred Heart of Jesus courtyard and prayer garden dedicated to the immaculate heart of Mary. Photo provided by Sacred Heart of Jesus School
Court says church school can’t be barred from state

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

In a 7-2 decision, the Supreme Court June 26 said a Lutheran preschool should not be excluded from a state grant program to refurbish its playground surface just because it is a religious entity.

“The exclusion of Trinity Lutheran from a public benefit for which it is otherwise qualified, solely because it is a church, is odious to our Constitution all the same, and cannot stand,” wrote Chief Justice John Roberts in the court’s opinion.

The court’s decision reverses a ruling by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that had sided with the state’s 2015 decision to exclude the school from obtaining grant funds.

Roberts said the appeals court decision made it clear that the Trinity Lutheran preschool was “put to the choice between being a church and receiving a government benefit,” and the answer they were given was: “No churches need apply.”

At issue in Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer was the school’s denial of grant reimbursement to nonprofit groups for the cost of purchasing and installing playground surfaces using recycled tires through a state program.

Missouri’s Department of Natural Resources, which administers the playground resurfacing program, ranked Trinity Lutheran’s grant application fifth out of the 44 it received. The department, which funds 14 grants, said it denied the school’s application because the state constitution prohibits state funds from going “directly or indirectly, in aid of any church, sect or denomination of religion.”

Roberts, writing the court’s 19-page opinion, said the student in question in the Davey case was not denied a scholarship because of who he was but “because of what he proposed to do – using taxpayer funds in a clergy training program.” In the playground resurfacing case, Roberts wrote: “There is no question that Trinity

Activists rally outside U.S. Supreme Court in Washington June 26 after the court sided with Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo., which sued after being denied a state grant for creating a safer playground. CNS photo by Yuri Gripas | Reuters

Limited openings for qualified applicants

St. Thomas More Catholic School students integrate technology as a learning tool for engaged and relevant lessons in all subject areas and grades through the use of updated Computer Lab, Project Lab, Multi-media Library and in classrooms with iPads and Chrome Books.
St. Thomas More School expands and upgrades technology program

St. Thomas More School, in Baton Rouge, expanded and upgraded its technology program across all grade levels this summer for students to use these learning tools in all subject areas. Included in this program are new computers and software for a technology project lab, grade level sets of Chromebooks and iPads with educational applications. Technology is immersed across the curriculum to support interactive, engaged, hands-on learning, problem solving activities and lab experiences. STM students working with fifth-grade teacher Katein Curry, center, are, from left, Camille Curry, Avery Deaton, Selena Pham, Ann Geyer and Araceli Sturiale. Photo provided by St. Thomas More School

CHS donates used laptops to St. Theresa Middle School

With gratitude and appreciation, St. Theresa Middle School in Gonzales accepted 68 gently-used laptops for use by the eighth-grade class, making the entire grade level equipped one-to-one with a computing device. Catholic High School in Baton Rouge refurbished the laptops to like-new condition and provided training to St. Theresa teachers on how to utilize the laptops as a valuable teaching tool. Access to and assistance from the Catholic High School technology helpdesk, which is run by Catholic High School students who actually repair computing devices such as these laptops, was also provided.

St. Theresa Middle eighth-grader Joe Richardson makes use of one of the used laptops donated by Catholic High School to St. Theresa Middle. Photo provided by St. Theresa Middle School

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- Taylor, Porter, Brooks & Phillips, LLP
- YMCA of the Capital Area

We would like to sincerely thank the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady for serving as the school’s religious sponsor as well as the support from our local Board of Directors.

To learn more about Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School, visit cristoreybr.org or call 615-7479.
Avoid, deny, defend

By Ann M. Bare
Special to The Catholic Commentator

Stop, look and listen.
Stop, drop and roll.
Now we add: Avoid, deny, defend.

Unfortunately, campuses have become a target for active shooters. No longer can we assume that once kids are at school, they’re safe. According to 2016 FBI information, in the last decade, 20 percent of active shooter events occurred in schools. With more than 42,000 high schools, colleges and universities in America, only a very small percentage has experienced such a tragedy; however, awareness, training and education are essential as students enter and exit buildings and classrooms.

Avoid: When you see an active shooter, if possible, RUN through the nearest safe exit and tell others to do the same. Call 911 ASAP, of course.

Deny: If you can’t safely exit, deny the shooter access to where you are. Get in a safe room, turn off all lights, lock the doors and barricade it with whatever is accessible, then get out of sight. Make a loop around the door handle with a computer or electrical cord, belts, ties, etc. and use all your weight to tug on it as an added measure to prevent the shooter from entering. Of course, absolute quiet is essential to present an “empty” room.

Defend: If you can’t avoid or deny access, be ready to defend yourself. Hopeful thinking was never an option, but reality does not support such a singular approach. Being prepared may be the successful method of survival.

In 2002, Texas State University initiated the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT)™ Program to train law enforcement officers how to quickly address active threat situations. They also created a course to train civilians how to respond in such an event: Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE). CRASE promotes an effectual procedure for civilians: Avoid. Deny. Defend. (ADD). Always be vigilant for suspicious behavior. If your “gut” is uneasy about someone or a situation, don’t ignore that feeling. Tell someone, or if you’re alone, call 911. If immediate danger is verified.

The Catholic Commentator 2017 Back to School July 7, 2017
What can evangelize the world? A good Catholic school

PHOENIX, ARIZ. (CNA/EWTN News) The Catholic school can be a missionary force to bring Christ to the world, the Bishop of Phoenix has said in a new apostolic letter.

“A mark of a truly Catholic school is the fruit that is borne in the lives of its graduates,” Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix said. “That fruit is to be shown in the missionary activity of its graduates, called and sent by Jesus to be salt and light in the culture around them, knowing that people and cultures die without Christ.”

His letter said Catholic schools should be “a place of encounter with Jesus Christ” that can impart a Catholic worldview through the curriculum, help students achieve true freedom, and send them out as “missionary disciples to transform the culture.”

Many Catholic school students first must have a relationship of trust with someone who is a disciple of Christ, but once that is established “through hospitality and kindness,” he said, “the most loving thing a Catholic school can do is to share with each person the living Jesus Christ.”

Catholic schools help ensure that all students hear the basic Gospel message and are given “the freedom and help to make a response in faith.” Catholic schools “cannot exist for themselves.” Rather, the Gospel demands that when students are well-formed they be sent out “as ambassadors of the truth and love of Christ.”

Bishop Olmsted reflected that true freedom of Catholic education is rooted in the truth and draws from Christ’s words from the Gospel of John: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

“A joyful and evangelized person is truly free to be and to live as a child of God,” he said, criticizing views of freedom that separate it from truth. He contrasted freedom with slavery to sin.

“When Catholic education imparts to students the intellectual and moral virtues to know the truth and to love the good (which are both ultimately found in God) it is giving students the gift of true freedom,” he said.

According to Bishop Olmsted, Catholic schools are much more than public schools with religion class and morality added.

A mark of a truly Catholic school is the fruit that is borne in the lives of its graduates, according to some Catholic officials. Catholic schools help ensure that all students hear the basic Gospel message.

“Rather, the ethos of a Christian education vivifies and unites the totality of the school’s curriculum,” he said, praising Catholic educators’ “noble vocation” to help young people discover who they are.

“May the parents, teachers and school children of our Catholic schools – through their constant contact with Jesus the Word made Flesh – be inspired missionary disciples of his kingdom,” Bishop Olmsted said.

READY ▼
From page 9B

Fully there are others with you to attack if danger is imminent. And attack with everything and anything you have: weapon, chair, fire extinguisher, scissors, printer, sharp stick, etc. Eyes, neck and groin are vulnerable areas which quickly bring a perp down. Your life (and others’) undoubtedly depends on the effectiveness of your all-out attack.

It usually takes about three minutes for police to arrive after a call is made. When they’re on the scene, DO all they command: Lie down on the floor, put your hands up, run out of the building, throw down your weapon, etc. They’re looking for an attacker; they don’t know if it is you or someone else. Let them do their job. You can defend yourself after the threat has been removed.

You don’t have to live in fear; rather, be aware of the people around you. You can learn more about Avoid Deny Defend™ at avoiddenydefend.org.

AVOID ▼
From page 11B

fully there are others with you to attack if danger is imminent. And attack with everything and anything you have: weapon, chair, fire extinguisher, scissors, printer, sharp stick, etc. Eyes, neck and groin are vulnerable areas which quickly bring a perp down. Your life (and others’) undoubtedly depends on the effectiveness of your all-out attack.

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OLOM ▼
From page 11B

horizon for the future of Mercy’s campus – a new gymnasium, renovation of the current gym which will become a performing arts center, a columbarium for the inurnment of cremains, additional parking, public restrooms, an outdoor plaza and gathering space and a new parish ministry building. For more information about Our Lady of Mercy and progress of the church and school, visit traditionsfortomorrow.com.
Lutheran was denied a grant simply because of what it is—a church.

Roberts’ opinion states from the outset that he did not concur with footnote No. 3. Justices Anthony Kennedy, Samuel Alito and Elena Kagan concurred in full with the opinion. Justice Sonia Sotomayor issued a 27-page dissenting opinion joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The footnote in question says: “This case involves express discrimination based on religious identity with respect to playground resurfacing. We do not address religious uses of funding or other forms of discrimination,” which may limit the scope of the ruling.

Sotomayor said the court described the Lutheran school decision as “a simple case about recycling tires to resurface a playground,” but she warned that the “stakes are higher.”

She said the court’s ruling “profoundly changes” the relationship between church and state “by holding, for the first time, that the Constitution requires the government to provide public funds directly to a church.”

“Today’s decision is a landmark victory for religious freedom,” said Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty. “The Supreme Court rightly recognized that people of faith should not be discriminated against when it comes to government programs that should be made available to all.”

He also said the high court’s ruling “marks a step in the right direction toward limiting the effects of the pernicious Blaine amendments that are in place in many states around the country.”

The amendments to state constitutions, dating back to the 19th century for the most part, “stem from a time of intense anti-Catholic bigotry in many parts of the country,” he said in a statement. These “harmful provisions,” he added, have “restricted the freedom of faith-based organizations and people of faith to serve their communities.”

Hannah Smith, senior counsel at Becket, a nonprofit religious liberty law firm, called the court’s decision “good for kids and good for religious liberty.”

Becket filed a friend-of-the-court brief on the school’s behalf as did the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Missouri Catholic Conference, the National Catholic Educational Association, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America and the Salvation Army.

“This decision is significant because seven of the justices agreed that churches can’t be treated as second-class citizens when it comes to widely available public safety benefits,” said Smith.

Hi-Q, Lo-Q or No-Q?

By Ann M. Bare

Intelligence – most dictionaries include in their definition “the ability or capacity to acquire and apply knowledge and skills.” Seems pretty simple. Everyone has intelligence.

The French psychologist Alfred Binet (1857–1911) is the first person to develop tests which measured children’s ability to learn when France passed a law that children aged 6–14 attend school. The concept came to America during WWI; IQ (intelligence quotient) tests were used to place soldiers in suitable roles. Other uses and misuses, however, often created hardship for immigrants, minorities and mentally challenged people. The test results were sometimes used to analyze the impact and/or effects of culture, environment, race, genetics, brain size or other factors on a person’s intellectual ability.

Figuring an individual’s IQ is quite simple: divide the mental age (test result of same-age people) by the chronological age (how old the person actually is). That quotient (reminder: a quotient is the answer to a division problem) is then multiplied by 100: MA ÷ CA x 100. About 95 percent of a tested population usually has an IQ between 70 and 130.

An issue to consider: There is such an emphasis on students’ IQs by those who esteem their definition of intelligence. But who designed the tests used to ascertain the IQ? What in their educational experience determined what should be tested? Are some students’ IQs being measured against a standard that isn’t even appropriate to their culture, experience or way of thinking?

So many students are impressed or intimidated by others’ or their own IQ. Hopefully, their thoughts will be counterbalanced with a more complete perspective. In a culture that emphasizes intelligence (and beauty), pride in a high IQ can overshadow a more meaningful attribute.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in an article in 1947 written for the Morehouse College student paper, stated, “We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education. ... If we are not careful, our colleges will produce a group of close-minded, unscientific, illogical propagandists, consumed with immoral acts. Be careful; ‘brethren!’ Be careful, teachers!”

Character – now there’s a life-long important quality. Students do have the intelligence to pursue it.