Back to School

- Get to know the new principals in the diocese
- New information of current schools
- Get to know the new school in the diocese

Supplement of The Catholic Commentator
Blessings for a new school year

From The Bishop
Bishop Robert W. Muench

F
ive character-
istics identify a
school as being
truly Catholic: 1) 
Inspired by a super-
natural vision; 2) 
Founded on Christian 
antropology; 3) Ani-
mated by Communion 
and community; 4) 
Imbued with a Catho-
lie view throughout 
such status reflects
sustainable by Gospel

excellence: superintendent
work so hard to make our Catholic
college.

Secondary schools, and one four-year
parochial and one independent
elementary schools, seven diocesan/

II
gation for Catholic

from Sacred Scrip-
ture and sacred tradition, the applica-
tion of timeless truths and values to an
ever changing society.

The beginning of every school year
brings new hope, energy, idealism and
future to help positively support and shape
the ideals and goals for our students.
This is done through the cooperation
of home with schools, parents and
siblings with clergy and lay faithful,
the invaluable witness of our person-
el, the celebration of the sacraments
of the church, personal and communal
prayer, the teaching of the truths of
faith handed down from sacred Scrip-
ture and sacred tradition, the applica-
tion of timeless truths and values to an
ever changing society.

May our 2016-2017 aca-
demic year be our best year ever.
Regards, grace, peace, blessing and
prayers to all in Christ.

From the 
Superintendent
Dr. Melanie B. Verges

Excellent hallmark of 
Catholic schools

ow gratifying it
was for the Catho-
ic schools in the
Diocese of Baton Rouge to
again be awarded district
accreditation through the
Southern Association of
Colleges and Schools
(Advanc-Ed) this past
year.

The honor of achiev-
such status reflects
what we have long known
about Catholic schools in
our diocese: Excellence is
the hallmark of Catholic
schools in the Diocese of
Baton Rouge. With a vi-
sion to Evangelize Hearts,
Educate Minds, Encourage
Talent, and Embrace the Future, Catholic
schools focus on that which is essential for
student development.

Schools throughout the diocese provide
strong programs for faith development
and academic preparation, as measured
through nationally-normed standard-
ized testing instruments. The 2015-16
Assessment of Catechesis and Religious
Education (ACRE) for students in grades
5, 8 and 11 indicates faith knowledge
that is above national norms. The ACT Aspire
assessment was used for academic testing
for the first time in our
dioce this past year.

Elementary principals
adopted that challenging
assessment instrument
to better chart higher
expectations of academic
achievement. Though
implementation of the
new test was a challenge,
results indicated that
students in the diocese
perform above national
average. Likewise, the
high school ACT scores
for the Class of 2016 were
strong, rising above that of
previous years and show-
ing strong gains above
state and federal averages.

In addition to improvements within
regular education programs, service
to students with special learning needs was
expanded during the 2015-16 school year
as the special education classes opened in
five school sites. As a result, parents have
been able to access Catholic education for
their non-traditional learners closer to
home. In addition to classes for autism and
intellectual disability, schools have added
dyslexia labs and resource programs to
help all students realize their full academic

SEE VERGES PAGE 3B

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Cristo Rey School introduces diocese to new educational model

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Who knew there could so many decisions and minute details involved in the opening of a new school? For Aimee Wiles, the process has been as exhilarating as exhausting. Wiles, the incoming principal of the new Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School, has been involved with everything, from testing her fashion design skills for school uniforms to being involved with selection of a school mascot to finalizing a student planner.

“It’s been a challenge but it’s been an amazing opportunity,” said Wiles, who spent eight years teaching at a Cristo Rey school in Chicago and the past several years as an assistant principal at St. Michael High School.

“Not too many people get to build their own school,” she added. “It’s a fun thing to do, to know you are establishing part of the culture of the school and some of the traditions as well. It’s rewarding.”

When the doors of the former Redemptorist High School invite in a new era on Aug. 5, a vastly renovated building will greet students. Aging and inefficient window air conditioning units have been replaced with more energy efficient and quieter units.

The floors, ceilings and walls have been repainted, and two bathrooms that had not been in use for several years have been spruced up. The cafeteria has also undergone a makeover, with new tables ready to accommodate a freshman population that could range anywhere from 75 to 90 students.

“We think we made a significant change in the amenities,” said Dr. James Llorens, who has played an integral role in helping bring the school from concept to reality and will serve as its inaugural president.

Because the old Redemptorist sported four wings of seven classrooms each, Llorens said plans were made to renovate only one of the wings to accommodate the incoming class.

“That evolved from what we liked to see and what we can afford,” he said, adding that the school is leasing the building from the Diocese of Baton Rouge with two five-year options and an option to purchase.

Founded in 1996 by Father John Foley SJ in Chicago, Cristo Rey schools have expanded to 28 nationwide with a combined enrollment of 9,000 students. According to figures released by the network, 90 percent of Cristo Rey students attend college and 100 percent have been accepted into colleges.

The system is structured that a freshman will work at a job one day, followed by a sophomore, junior and senior. Each student spends the school year working for that particular company and must work the same hours as the regular employees on that particular day.

“It’s just a great model and I’m so happy that it’s here in Baton Rouge,” Wiles said. “I’ve seen the way it can change the community and it can change students and really be a light in a community where there is a lot of darkness. Many of my former students in Chicago are very, very successful today. And they would never have had that opportunity unless they were in a Cristo Rey school.”

Wiles said students and teachers will notice several differences than that of a traditional school. For starters, the school day is longer. Although classes are held from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., because the way the day is structured with students each day going out in the community to work, the busses do not leave until 4:30 p.m.

SEE CRISTO REY PAGE 10B
Ascension Catholic principal brings a sense of love to school

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Ascension Catholic School’s incoming principal John Beck said embracing, repeating and sharing three words will help people achieve personal and professional fulfillment: I love you.

Beck’s beliefs on the best way to live echo that of St. John, considered the apostle of love: “As Christ loves us, we are to love others. God is love, and we, as Christians, are to be channels of God’s love to our neighbors.”

Beck says “I love you” are the operative words in every moment of his personal development, which he does for at least two hours daily. “I’m thinking it, I’m seeing it... Those words cleanse my soul and make me become a better person,” said Beck.

He said love is the guiding principle in decisions made in a career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him 22 years on the Federal Relations Team, which he does for at least two hours daily.

“Those words cleanse my soul and make me become a better person,” said Beck. He said love is the guiding principle in decisions made in a career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him full circle, from the classroom to career path that has brought him full circle.

Beck is well-known for his work in the education field, serving at the local, state and national levels. He served as a legislative liaison for the Assumption Civil Parish School Board and 22 years on the Federal Relations Team, which he does for at least two hours daily.

Beck said he is a “Catholic school boy” who has been Catholic for the past 50 years. After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in education from Nicholls State University in 1970 and a master’s degree in administration and supervision in education in 1974, Beck taught in the Assumption School Parish School System. He then ventured into a career in business and was successful, and eventually opened a business for himself.

When his wife became ill with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, he dedicated his time to helping her. After successful treatment, his wife went into remission. She then encouraged Beck to continue his passion for education. Beck is well-known for his work in the education field, serving at the local, state and national levels. He served as a legislative liaison for the Assumption Civil Parish School Board and 22 years on the Federal Relations Team, which he does for at least two hours daily.

He acknowledged that he has a “learning curve” in making the transition from public to private education, which will raise their level of thinking and arithmetic so they can get to the essence of who they are,” said Beck. “They can rise above that and get into the flow above that and get into the flow above that and get into the flow above that and get into the flow above that and get into the flow.

John Beck

He said his plans include raising the children’s level of thinking, which will raise their level of action. “It’s more than reading, writing and arithmetic so they can get to the essence of who they are,” said Beck. “They can rise above that and get into the flow.” said Beck.

He knows parents have high expectations of the education their children will receive at Ascension Catholic, which he wants to exceed.

“The foundation of Ascension Catholic is the strong Catholic faith of the community,” Beck said. “The legacy of the school goes back to 1842 so we have to build on that legacy and strengthen it for the future,” Beck said.

“Our academic scores continue to exceed state and national benchmarks. Our athletic programs are going strong and we have won numerous state championships and are competitive in the district,” said Beck.

He said his plans include raising the children’s level of thinking, which will raise their level of action. “It’s more than reading, writing and arithmetic so they can get to the essence of who they are,” said Beck. “They can rise above that and get into the flow of things.”

SEE BECK PAGE 5B

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MBS principal believes Catholic education is a ‘school of life’

By Debbie Shelley
The Catholic Commentator

Cheri Marque Gioe, Most Blessed Sacrament School’s new principal, learned through her immersion in the Catholic faith that Catholic education is a “school of life” where students learn life skills, form life-long relationships and delve deeper into life-giving faith.

Gioe grew up in Baton Rouge. She was about 12- or 13-years-old when her family moved to New Roads, where she attended Catholic of Pointe Coupée. She was active at St. Mary of False River Church in New Roads, singing in the church choir, joining the youth group and attending many of their retreats.

“It really had these rich relationships that were forged as a youth that continued into my professional life,” said Gioe. “These people were part of my faith as a youth and were baptizing my children, etc. They are a part of my family.”

A person with more than 25 years of experience as an educator, manager and administrator, Gioe said she wants to pass on the values instilled in her to the next generation.

Gioe, who earned her bachelor’s degree in family, child and consumer science and masters of education degree from LSU, has successfully coordinated and implemented developmentally appropriate programs in many educational environments, including Catholic schools. She was the director of Broadmoor Baptist Early Learning Center before she became an extension associate at the LSU AgCenter Family, Child and Consumer Sciences School of Human Ecology.

In 2009, Gioe was hired as assistant principal of Our Lady of Mercy School and served there until 2012, when she was chosen assistant principal at St. George School.

As she takes over the helm of MBS, Gioe said she is inspired by former principal Maria Cloessler’s leadership role in forming a strong Catholic foundation and identity at the school.

“The teachers come truly committed to their jobs as a vocation,” said Gioe. “They are not there to pick up a paycheck but to minister to the children and teach in the ways of their faith,” said Gioe.

Over the past couple of years, Cloessler focused on increasing technology at the school. Gioe said she would like to increase professional development so the school can maximize the use of technology for students and teachers. She furthermore wants to see the collaborative use of technology.

And because parents shop on the internet when deciding what school they want their child to attend, she wants to make sure that the school’s web page is vibrant and dynamic.

SEE GIOE PAGE 17B

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Dr. Judy Armstrong
St. Thomas More
Redemptorist St. Gerard appoints Carmouche as new principal

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Smiling easily, Lynn Mouton Carmouche knows instinctively the one thing that led her to Redemptorist St. Gerard School. “Faith drew me here,” said Carmouche who will serve as the school’s new principal.

“I attended Catholic schools, and I know the benefit of a good Catholic education,” she said. “I see this as a great opportunity to dust that gem off, polish it, shine it and make it strong,” Carmouche said.

She notes the school’s parents and even grandparents have been instrumental in helping her see all of the good the school offers. “When I first dropped in, I had grandparents jump in to help. They wanted to know what they could do to support me. That’s beautiful,” said Carmouche, who sees this as proof that families have chosen Redemptorist St. Gerard for a reason and want to make it better for their children.

As principal, Carmouche is determined to show that value to others in the community and wants to create a connection with businesses so everyone wins.

“We need people in the community to support our school. That’s critical. Part of my job is to go out and get that support. This school needs that; these children need that,” she said.

Carmouche, who has nearly 20 years of experience in education, previously served as dean of Inspire Charter Academy and as a Title I and science curriculum and instructional specialist in East Baton Rouge Parish. Her experience also includes positions as assistant principal and acting principal for schools in St. James and East Baton Rouge civil parishes.

But it is her experience in the classroom; experience that spans three states, including Florida, Missouri and Louisiana, that most defines Carmouche.

When she first graduated from LSU with a bachelor’s degree in science, Carmouche wanted to be a research scientist. It was only after she stepped into a classroom to cover a teacher’s sabbatical that Carmouche “fell in love with teaching.”

Since that time, she has earned an advanced degree as an educational specialist and a master’s degree in educational administration and leadership. She has led classes in various branches of science, from marine biology to anatomy, and she has taught students from college-age to elementary.

Carmouche admits that while she enjoyed teaching different levels of students, one of her favorite ages to teach was junior high, which probably explains why she is especially excited about this school year. “This is going to be our first year (at Redemptorist St. Gerard School) to have an eighth grade. I’m looking forward to helping these students become leaders,” she said.

Using the school theme “Cultivating Scholars with Pride and Passion,” Carmouche hopes to play up on the pride her students have in developing their talents, both academically and spiritually. She also hopes to expand participation in service projects, and she wants every student to take pride in Redemptorist St. Gerard.

“When you walk into this school, you can just feel the history here,” she said. “This school has been here since 1945.”

Lynn Mouton Carmouche

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St. Louis King of France principal excited to be returning ‘home’

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Paula Johnson is finally returning home.

Not to her native Georgia but to southeast Louisiana, a region that originally tugged at her heart as a 17-year-old freshman college student and has never let go.

Johnson is the incoming principal at St. Louis King of France School, eager to become a steadying influence to a school and church parish that has seen its share of changes in the past two years.

“I am so excited to be coming back not only to Baton Rouge but to have an opportunity to work in a Catholic environment,” said Johnson, who is a former East Baton Rouge Parish Schools assistant superintendent and who has spent the past five years in Vicksburg, Mississippi. “I have been coming back and forth to Baton Rouge a lot. I never lost connections; just gaining new ones.”

A new principal is not the only fresh look for SLKF students as the school will be transitioning to the project-based Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math (STREAM) learning method. STREAM is a variation of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) method that has gained popularity in the past several years.

“The job market requires, and is asking for graduates with a heavy background in technology and science,” Johnson said. “Part of technology and science is an immersion in math.

“In order to develop the whole child we are looking at the fine arts component and because we are Catholic it will blend into the religious aspect.”

Johnson said with STREAM teachers create an overall connective problem and through the problem-solving process students will be taught those learning skills associating with the expected objective.

She said that instead of educators receiving paper/pencil answers, students should be able to explain the problem-solving process and procedures they employed to arrive at the answer.

Johnson said the STREAM methodology encourages free-thinking, the setting of goals and acting out on strategies and steps.

“Students can internalize how to get from Point A to Point B instead of teachers just giving (students) questions A, B, C, and D and six weeks later (students) forget the answers to questions A, B, C and D,” Johnson said.

“When you do things, you remember them and that’s the foundation piece for this project-based learning.”

Johnson, who was recruited by Xavier University in New Orleans out of high school, said she is eagerly anticipating the spiritual opportunities that exist by being an administrator in a Catholic school. SLKF will be her first job in a Catholic setting.

“I am looking forward to giving kids that strong Christian and Catholic background that you cannot discuss in the public schools,” she said. “And then you have the power of prayer that’s encouraged in Catholic schools. You cannot do that in public schools.

“The opportunity to merge a facet or religious component, the opportunity to expose students to the values built into religion and to give them that foundation, that was the draw to me.”

Johnson stressed prayer will be fostered not only at Mass but also in the morning and afternoon, as well as at lunch, giving thanks to their parents and teachers. She said when talking with students, she starts every conversation with a prayer and will occasionally ask a student to start the prayer.

“When (students) see their principal and teachers praying and we model that for them, it makes it even more comparable for them because we are teaching them religious aspects,” she said. “As we go through life, and the older we get, you never forget those foundational prayers we learned when we were children. Now, you may make different choices but those foundational pieces given to you and taught to you by your grandparents or priests, you will carry that with you forever.”

Johnson said she is particularly excited and proud of the incoming seventh-grade class that has already committed to performing a minimum of 20 hours of community service work during the school year. Exactly what

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Schexnaydre ready to lead St. Jude

By Rachele Smith
The Catholic Commentator

Refueled and excited about her new position as principal of St. Jude the Apostle School, Tina Schexnaydre is once again doing what she loves.

Returning from sabbatical, Schexnaydre, who has over two decades of experience in education, previously served as the top administrator at St. John Primary in Prairieville. While there, she assisted in helping the school establish a partnership with nine church parishes creating St. John Primary and St. Theresa of Avila Middle, and she was instrumental in securing the school and the diocese's national accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (AdvancEd).

“I’m excited about this opportunity, and I’m looking forward to working together with (St. Jude School) teachers, staff and parents,” said Schexnaydre, who added, “And I’m really excited about seeing the students.”

In particular, it’s the students who helped Schexnaydre realize she wanted to work at St. Jude in the first place.

A member of the cluster community of St. Anthony de Padua in Darrow and St. Anne in Sorrento, Schexnaydre explained that her family first met students and their families from St. Jude School when her younger son, Dean, played football with them three years ago in the eighth grade.

“Students at St. Theresa of Avila and St. Jude came together to play on the same team, and I was just so impressed with the students from St. Jude. They had to wear our jerseys, and that takes a lot to leave your identity behind, especially when you are young, but that just shows their dedication to doing what they love to do,” said Schexnaydre, who still admires the way the St. Jude students were able to think about the team and everyone else and not just themselves.

“It was just a wonderful experience. They did what was best for everyone, and that’s what a principal has to do, too. You have to think about what is best for everyone,” she said.

As principal of St. Jude, Schexnaydre plans to encourage the school’s continuing legacy in high academics and spiritual growth and looks forward to getting to know its culture.

A product of Catholic schools (she attended St. Louise De Marillac for elementary school and graduated from Holy Angeles Academy in New Orleans), Schexnaydre appreciates the importance of combining moral and religious ideas with traditional academic instruction.

“I’ve always wanted to work in a Catholic school. Catholic education has always been special to me. I just think there’s something special about attending Mass with your classmates, attending retreats together and having clergy and priest come into your classroom,” she said.

In 2005, Schexnaydre was hired as principal of St. John Primary. But only weeks into her new position, Hurricane Katrina inundated South Louisiana.

“We had so much to do. We just had an influx of people coming to our school, but we did any and everything that we could do to comfort every child and their families that came to us,” she said.

Through her eight years at St. John Primary, Schexnaydre, who holds a master’s degree in administration and supervision, gained more experience, and as she prepares for her new role as principal at St. Jude, her family is supporting her, and that includes her daughter, Madeline.

Soon after learning her mom accepted the top job at St. Jude, Madeline congratulated her mom on Facebook adding, “I know she (Schexnaydre) will do amazing things and impact just as many people as she did before.”

Schexnaydre said the post was heartwarming, but it was her daughter’s final remark that drew the most emotion from her: #ProudestDaughterEver.
Cristo Rey will have a beautiful entrance to the main building, complete with a welcome desk. A teachers' lounge is also located off of the main hall, which opens up to the classroom area. The students will work the same job for the entire school year and could potentially go to the same job the following year, depending on the corporation.

Wiles said that in Chicago she had students work the same job for four years of high school, through college and some were even hired fulltime after graduating from college.

“I am absolutely encouraged by the response of the business community,” Wiles said. “They are excited, they are eager. They have a lot of questions but they are excited to receive their students and have them be a part of their departments.

For now, Wiles is busy putting the final touches of makeup on a new school. She wanted the adults in the eyes and shake their hands firmly. It was important that the students and the respect the adults. They would look the adults in the eyes and shake their hands firmly. It was important that the adults and have them be a part of their departments.

As Llorens guided a visitor through the Old Redemptorist High School building in preparation for the arrival of students Aug. 3.

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Cristo Rey principal James Wiles said a great deal of thought went into the design of student uniforms. The boys will wear blue pants with a blue shirt and the option of either a regular tie or bow tie. The bow tie is an option requested by incoming students. The girls uniform features a blue blouse and plaid skirt, and both uniforms contain the school colors of blue and gold.

Cristo Rey Baton Rouge president Dr. James Llorens inspects the refurbished cafeteria.

Llorens shows off a classroom that has been freshly painted and the air conditioners replaced. Cristo Rey officials are renovating seven classrooms that will accommodate a first-year enrollment from 75 to 90 students.

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St. Joseph’s Academy begins year with innovations

St. Joseph’s Academy will open the 2016-2017 academic year with several innovations designed to provide young women with the tools they need to succeed on the college level and beyond.

With a continued emphasis on increasing women’s representation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, SJA has expanded the Andrea Clesi McMakin ’74 STEM Lab to provide even more cross-curricular, hands-on learning opportunities in a laboratory setting. The lab, dedicated in June 2015, proved popular with students, necessitating the expansion this summer. An additional 320 square feet were added to the space located in Mother Alice Hall.

John Richardson, SJA’s co-director of technology, said the STEM lab provides students with access to 20 3D printers, laser cutters, arduinos and “lots of great electronic devices.” He said the lab will be filled every hour with engineering students as well as those from other disciplines wanting to utilize the state-of-the-art tools.

“We were one of the first schools in the country to have 3D printers,” Richardson said. “Having 20 of them, as well as the laser cutters, really puts our girls ahead of the game, enabling them to design projects which they can use in class. For example, science class students may be studying electricity and need to build waterwheels. Instead of going out and purchasing the items they need, they can create motors using the equipment in the lab, then print the paddle wheels that will turn the waterwheel that will turn on the light bulb. The idea is that they’re not only learning about concepts from a book standpoint; they are actually putting concepts into practice in the lab.”

To further integrate the success of the STEM lab across the curriculum, SJA will open the innovation and design lab with the start of the school year. The lab will offer cutting-edge, project-based learning to equip young women with 21st-century skills, including critical-thinking, collaboration, creating and problem-solving.

The lab will be the link between SJA’s 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 learn to creatively design solutions to real-world problems.

Students will gather and focus information, imagine the possibilities, design a prototype, then build and deliver it, according to Brianna Summers, director of innovation and design at SJA. “Students will identify a problem, develop empathy, brainstorm ideas for solutions and design an activity or object to help solve the problem,” she said. “The Innovation and Design model emphasizes

SJA students participated in a day-long Innovation Workshop conducted in March by the Innovation Institute from Newport Beach, California. Working in groups, the girls worked to understand the design-thinking process, then met the challenge of designing and prototyping a surgical tool using low-fidelity materials, including chopsticks and rubber bands. SJA will open the 2016-2017 academic year with an Innovation and Design Lab.

Photo provided by Mindy Averitt | St. Joseph’s Academy

SEE SJA PAGE 16B
Sacred Heart of Jesus School and Catholic High School form technology partnership

Sacred Heart of Jesus School will begin the school year with a new partnership with Catholic High School and its technology help desk. This collaboration will strengthen Sacred Heart's technology initiative while enhancing the relationship between the schools.

The first project in the partnership will create a one-to-one initiative for Sacred Heart's eighth-grade class. Each student will have a tablet for use in the classrooms and at home.

Catholic High's help desk will work during the summer to set up the tablets and make them user-ready. The eighth-graders will receive the tablets in August, and the Catholic High help desk crew will meet with the students to give them tutorials.

"I'm eager to work with the eighth-graders on various English projects utilizing the tablets," said eighth-grade English and homeroom teacher Beth Jones. "I can easily see the students writing and emailing papers to me, and the possibility for use with various graphic organizers is extremely appealing."

Sacred Heart technology coordinator Lisa Cossé and computer teacher Rayma Farlow have been participating in meetings sponsored by diocesan school technology coordinators. Information shared at the meetings includes the high school expectations of incoming freshmen with respect to their technology use. This information has been a motivating factor in moving to the one-to-one initiative.

"Knowing the technology proficiency expectations of Catholic High and other high schools is invaluable to our program," said Farlow. "Keyboarding is top of the list of proficiency skills, so we'll continue improving while enhancing our lesson plans to include skills such as email etiquette, cloud storage through Office 365, proper data backup and more."

Farlow is glad she'll be able to work with the students on the devices they'll be using in the classroom.

"I think it's important that the eighth-graders use the tablets in their computer class," she said. "This will make them more efficient as they use them for classroom work."

Farlow's goal is to develop cross-curriculum projects with classroom and activity teachers, including passion projects and genius hour. Genius hour allows students to research and complete an inquiry project based on their passions, which requires them to explore what motivates them.

They will be learning research skills, refining organizational skills, reading nonfiction articles, developing questions, writing, preparing the project and presenting the final project.

"The students are totally engaged in a project about their personal passion," Farlow said.

"I'm so excited that we'll be using tablets," said rising eighth-grader Zack Kemper. "This is a big responsibility for us, and I know we're ready for it."

Kemper's brother Mack is a rising sophomore at Catholic High and a member of the help desk crew.

"It's kind of cool that my brother will be teaching us how to use the tablets," Kemper said.

Another project will be the installation of 31 all-in-one computers in the Sacred Heart computer lab. Funding for the project comes from the diocese.

© Sacred Heart of Jesus School | Sacred Heart of Jesus School, a Fujitsu tablet that Sacred Heart's eighth-graders will use for the 2016-17 school year. The Catholic High School help desk technology crew is preparing the tablets as Sacred Heart begins its one-to-one initiative for the eighth grade class. The tech crew will also teach the eighth-graders learn how to use the devices. Photo provided by Lisa Cossé | Sacred Heart of Jesus School
St. Michael the Archangel High to offer Russian class

St. Michael the Archangel High School will be offering a Russian class to students during the upcoming year.

The class will be a language and culture course as it will serve as an introduction to the Russian language, as well as a survey of the major works of literature, art, music, history and politics that have shaped and defined Russia and its people. Whether it be the literature of Dostoevsky’s “Crime and Punishment” and “The Brothers Karamazov,” the music and ballets of Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker,” or the tumultuous, romantic and at times terrifying leaders of the country, such as Peter the Great, Catherine II, Lenin and Stalin, Russia and its people, for better or for worse, have defined part of humanity for the last three centuries.

Learning the language will not only give the students a unique linguistic opportunity that will open up a world of art and literature previously unavailable, but it has the opportunity to lay a foundation for future study in order to participate in our ever more globalized society, whether that be in business, law or government. Russian is listed as a “critical language” to learn for the United States Department of Education.

The class is intended to be challenging linguistically, as it will require the students to learn an entirely new alphabet and make sounds that are not common in English or some of the languages they’ve previously studied. Students will also analyze and synthesize human culture in a more intense and demanding way. This challenge will hopefully change and expand how they understand language, literature, history and politics, and encourage their own creativity, open-mindedness and critical thinking skills. Principal Ellen Lee adds, “Our administration and department chairs continuously evaluate our current courses as well as research new and challenging opportunities. We are excited to offer this unique class to our students.”

Chris Cole will be teaching this class. His love for Russia began at the age of 18 when he traveled there on a mission trip and continued to grow as he visited the country three more times.

“When I started college, I didn’t really know what I wanted to study,” Cole said. “I knew that I wanted to learn another language, and along with wanting to go back to Russia and see the friends I made there, so studying Russian became the obvious choice.”

Winston Churchill once said, “Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”

St. Michael is excited to offer this new course and school officials are looking forward to students diving into this mystery of Russia.
St. Aloysius School advancing through STEM

An emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) has created several initiatives to better prepare students at St. Aloysius School. Those initiatives include:

S – Having a full-time science lab coordinator has not only increased lab experiments based in science inquiry, but is creating a scope and sequence to challenge our students at higher levels of knowledge. As a result, science test scores have increased substantially.

T – In a similar way as the science initiative, the school is investing in technology – a new computer lab, iPads, iPad minis, and teacher training. The school is also adding a full-time computer lab teacher/trainer in order to meet goals that better prepare students for the one-to-one experience they will receive in high school. Upgrading servers, wiring and computers will provide a more effective experience. Scope and sequence will be completed in May 2017 to better coordinate more challenging coursework.

E – The Robotics Club has been actively participating in diocesan-wide competitions. Their demonstrations and applications continue to become more complex. The school’s STEM night, of which they are a part, includes engineering companies that challenge students and parents in a fun, educational way. Building of rockets, mini-boats and simple machines makes learning relevant with real-life applications.

M – St. Aloysius students have a history of scoring well in math. All eighth-grade students take algebra I for high school credit. This creates an expectation in the younger grades to challenge and prepare the students for this class. As evidenced by the school’s prestigious Blue Ribbon Award, St. Aloysius students scored in the top 15 percent in the nation in both math and English.

St. Peter Chanel eighth-graders awarded

As St. Peter Chanel eighth-grade students celebrated the end of the school year, the Class of 2016 was given awards earned during the past year.

The following awards were given: Eighth-Grade Student of the Year: Jade Ordeneaux; Gina Troxclair Award: Hannah Rousseau and Reghan San Andres; St. Peter Chanel Christian Award: Camryn Long and Jade Ordeneaux; Bishop Ott Award: Kami Dufresne and Sara Poche; SPC Highest Scholastic Award: Jade Ordeneaux; Catholic Daughters Scholarship: Wintress Landry; Catholic Daughters Computer Art Contest: Erin Richard; Maryknoll Essay Contest: Codi Dicharry; East St. James Ladies Auxiliary V.F.W. Americanism Essay Contest: first place, Codi Dicharry; second place, Wintress Landry; third place, Kami Dufresne; Presidential Academic Award for Educational Excellence: Kami Dufresne, Jade Ordeneaux and Erin Richard; Presidential Academic Award for Educational Achievement: Brianna Allen, Wintress Landry, Camryn Long, Sara Poche, Erin Richard and Hannah Rousseau; SPC Athletic Scholar Award: Kami Dufresne and Jade Ordeneaux; Subject Award for Religion, English, Literature, Math, Social Studies and Science: Jade Ordeneaux; and Woodmen of the World Award: Jade Ordeneaux.
SACRED HEART HAS A FULL-SERVICE HELP DESK AND TECHNOLOGY OFFICE.

"Catholic High's help desk is proud to work with Sacred Heart," said Catholic High's director of technology Jay Butcher. "While our goal is to help the school with their technology needs and uses, we know this is a wonderful opportunity for our help desk crew to improve their skills as well."

"We are so excited about this new partnership with Catholic High and the advances we're making in technology for the 2016-17 school year," Hutson said. "Obviously the one-to-one initiative for our eighth-graders is a huge step for us, one that we know will be productive."

JOHNSON  
From page 88

those services will be is yet to be determined, but it's something the students decided to do on their own without any prodding from the adults. "I am just so proud of them for being so active," she said.

Johnson's life remains hectic as she continues to unpack and learn new faces, but she has enjoyed going back to some of her favorite restaurants.

"The hardest transition is unpacking," she said with a smile that has seemingly never waved since returning to a place that captured her heart so many years ago.

ST. JOSEPH OF JESUS SCHOOL

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Welcome Back to School

The Catholic Commentator 2016  BACK TO SCHOOL  July 8, 2016

PARTNERSHIP

From page 138

Computers is through a grant from the E.J. and Marjory B. Oursou Family Foundation, the Sacred Heart Home and School Association, and the school's "30 for 30" campaign.

"Sacred Heart has a history with the Oursou Family Foundation, and we are grateful that the foundation is supporting our new computer lab with the grant," said Sacred Heart principal Joan Hutson. "We continue to be amazed by the parents in our home and school association whose hard work and love of Sacred Heart bless us daily. We are grateful for those who donated to the school in our '30 for 30' campaign."

The campaign is an initiative that allowed alumni and friends to recognize 2015 teacher retirees with a donation to the school in their honor. Donations to this initiative were earmarked for technology.

"Obviously the new equipment in the lab has a huge impact on our students," Farlow said. "The speed and efficiency the new units will provide, will only enhance lesson plans including keyboarding, PowerPoint, Word and research. Office 365 will allow us to teach cloud storage to the younger students."

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Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Schools

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, 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.

The above stated policy applies to the following schools and institutions of the Diocese:

Catholic High School (Baton Rouge)  
Catholic Elementary of Pointe Coupée  
Catholic High of Pointe Coupé  
Cristo Rey Baton Rouge  
Franciscan High School  
Holy Family School  
Holy Ghost School  
Mater Dolorosa School  
Most Blessed Sacrament School  
Our Lady of Mercy School  
Redemptorist St. Gerard School  
Sacred Heart of Jesus School  
Special Education Program  
St. Aloysius School  
St. Alphonsus School  
St. John Primary & St. Theresa Middle School – EA/EL Partnership  
St. Elizabeth Interparochial School  
St. Francis Xavier School  
St. George School  
St. Jean Vianney School  
St. John Interparochial School  
St. Joseph School  
St. Joseph's Academy  
St. Jude the Apostle School  
St. Louis King of France School  
St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan Regional High School  
St. Peter Chanel Interparochial School  
St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School  
St. Thomas More School

Dr. Melanie B. Verges  
Superintendent
TOP OF THE CLASS – For the second consecutive year, the St. Theresa Middle Math Club won the top honor at the St. Joseph’s Academy Math Tournament. Math club students attending the tournament completed two math tests, one multiple choice and one open response. The sweepstakes title is awarded to the school with the most individual awards. St. Theresa Middle fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students on the team finished with 35 awards and brought home the sweepstakes title. Photo provided by St. Theresa Middle School

GIOE ▼
from page 5B

She also wants to make sure that the message gets out that MBS is a Blue Ribbon school.

“Parents will ask, ‘Are you a Blue Ribbon school?’ They are young professionals and looking for Blue Ribbon schools,” Goe said.

She also wants to further develop the strong connections MBS has with parents, MBS parish and the community. She particularly wants to invite families to become involved with the school, such as attending the church Masses and “beautiful celebrations” that occur throughout the year.

But the most important messages she wants to convey are to the students. She wants them to feel secure in their knowledge that they are children of God and are well prepared for the future. She said the biggest measure of success for her is when the teachers and students are smiling and the students excitedly share what they have been learning.

“When they leave MBS I want them to feel confident and capable when they get to high school,” Goe said.

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ROBICHEAUX ▼
From page 3B

sition with the Department of Education in June 2011, with her primary responsibility working with school districts in making policy changes to adapt to new standards and evaluation processes passed by the Legislature in 2012.

She earned a Level 2 teaching certificate in special education and has taught courses specializing in special education in the alternative certification program.

“The position) truly brings my passions together,” Robicheaux said. “My passion for faith and my passion for education within education for special education.”

She said her love of special education began at an early age when her father started shelter workshops for people with cognitive disabilities during the administration of former President Richard Nixon. A significant portion of her childhood was spent interacting with individuals with some disability, whether it was at Christmas parties or helping them plant a hydroponic tomato farm.

“I saw the love my dad had and that charisma that he shared for that part of our population,” Robicheaux said. “I thought it was neat work and I would love to get into that one day.”

Her parents also nurtured her spiritually through their extensive work in the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin. Her father served for several years as the family life director before becoming president of a Catholic school system in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Her mother has now taken over the role of director of family life in La Crosse.

“That spirituality, I think the way I grew up and seeing their work within the Catholic Church, it kind of ticked in the back of my head where this could end up,” Robicheaux said, adding that on the Teach for American application she checked the box asking if she would be interested in teaching special ed.

“One day I fell in love with it and fell in love with the students and created an 11-year career,” she said.

Robicheaux is scheduled to start at the diocese on July 14.

WELCOME STA FRESHMEN – The St. Thomas Aquinas Student Council traditionally hosts freshman orientation to welcome the new Falcons to their nest. They produce a parody video over the summer entitled “The Unspoken Rules” and also teach the fight song and school spirit traditions. Photo provided by Michelle Chauvin | St. Thomas Aquinas High School

Kaci Hamilton, a rising fourth-grader at St. Francis Xavier Interparochial School, reads while teacher Jacquelyn Hunt watches. Hamilton was participating in a reading activity with the class.

Qualified students admitted regardless of race, gender or nationality.

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SERVICE AND ACADEMICS AT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER—Cheryl Domino, assistant principal at St. Francis Xavier Interparochial School, and Kaelyn Anderson prepare holy water bottles during Holy Week. Photo provided by Paula Fabre | St. Francis Interparochial School

July 8, 2016

July 8, 2016
Mercy moving forward: Welcoming families to be happy, healthy and holy

Mid-city in Baton Rouge is experiencing a renaissance with an influx of restaurants, shops, businesses and residents who all want to be in the heart of the city. Our Lady of Mercy Church has contributed to and benefited from the energy and new life flowing through the area. Father Cleo Milano, Our Lady of Mercy’s fifth pastor, often remarks “Mercy is the pearl of Mid-City,” and Mercy continues to move forward through exciting phases of growth during the next school year.

The school enrollment has grown from 760 students in 2012 to 955 into 2016-17, a 25 percent increase in enrollment during the past four years. The school has waiting lists in five of its grades, and the number of young families joining the parish has risen exponentially.

“It is of the highest priority for our parish to welcome these faith-filled, joyous young families to our parish community,” according to parish administrator Randy Arbuckle.

This past fall Mercy completed a nine-month master planning process with all of its stakeholders with the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) that generated a 20-year master plan for the church and school. A feasibility planning study was then conducted by New York-based consulting firm Guidance in Giving that resulted in the decision to launch a capital campaign this summer. The mission planning study was then conducted by New York-based consulting firm Guidance in Giving that resulted in the decision to launch a capital campaign this summer.

Phase I of the campaign will fund the first two projects of the Traditions for Tomorrow master plan: a new state-of-the-art gymnasium and an expansion to the early childhood classroom building.

The new gymnasium will serve the robust and successful athletic program, while allowing the current gym (originally built as a church) to be utilized for choir, band, musical theater, drama, cheer, dance and other performing and fine arts programs. The expanded early childhood building will provide additional classroom space to meet the high demand for admissions and to reduce class size in grades K-5. School families and parishioners have already committed $7 million for these two new facilities at the school.

OLOM principal Brian Moscona is enthusiastic and added, “Mercy is blessed that these top-tier projects will continue to make our parish family, happy, healthy and holy!”

During the construction phase, the school will utilize modular classroom buildings beginning in August. The temporary classroom buildings will immediately reduce the average class size at Mercy to 22 students per class.

The village of 12 modular classrooms are lovingly referred to as the “12 tribes of God’s chosen people” for those students who are now a “pilgrim people” during this exciting time of transition. The teachers have also embraced this transitional season, proudly displaying their self-proclaimed nickname “The Village People” on new t-shirts to be worn at the start of the school year.

The timeline for construction of the two buildings is approximately 18 months. Sequencing of the projects is being designed so as to minimize impact on the students and parishioners, while maintaining safety and maximizing good stewardship.

Our Lady of Mercy Church, the pearl of Mid-City, is a place of forgiveness and healing, a place of quiet prayer and joyful celebration, a treasure of sacramental life and grace. She is a loving mother ready to welcome her children back to school.

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Children may attend after school care from 2:45-6:00 P.M.

STUDENT GUMSHOES – Hammond police detectives Chase Zaffuto, from left, and Myles Miller along with Detective George Bergeron, not pictured, spoke with the fifth-grade B-Quest class at Holy Ghost School about crime scenes. The students were finishing a unit on forensic science and solving “The Mystery of the Missing Lunch.” The detectives had the classroom roped off as a crime scene and spoke to the students about processing crime scenes and collecting evidence.

“Catholic schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of their educational policies.”

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“Catholic schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of their educational policies.”
Nominations sought for OLOLC alumni and community service awards

Our Lady of the Lake College is soliciting nominations for Our Lady of the Lake College’s annual Fête des Fidèles award luncheon to be held on Oct. 8 at L’Auberge in Baton Rouge.

The Franciscan Impact Award recognizes a member of the community who exemplifies a commitment to the Franciscan concept of joyful service to others. Nominees for this award are community members who give of their time, leadership, guidance or other personal support to those most in need and have an affiliation with the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System or Our Lady of the Lake College.

The Distinguished Alumni Franciscan Impact Award recognizes alumni graduating greater than 15 years previously. The individual must demonstrate a willingness to foster collaboration, a commitment to high professional standards and the vision to make a significant difference in his/her community as a community leader.

The Rising Star Alumni Award recognizes an alumnus who has graduated within the past five years and the Shining Star Alumni Award recognizes an alumnus who has graduated from five to 15 years ago, were established to honor alumni actively contributing to their profession and positively impacting our community. Nominees for this award should demonstrate professional accomplishment, a commitment to high professional standards and should exemplify a commitment to the Franciscan concept of joyful service to others.

The nomination deadline is Friday, July 15 and nominations can be submitted online at ololcollege.edu/nomination.

Nomination forms may also be submitted to the Office of Institutional Advancement, 5414 Brittany Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70808; or by email to elaine.crowe@ololcollege.edu.

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