



Parish of Ascension

OFFICE of COMMUNICATIONS

KENNY MATASSA
Parish President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Matassa Recognizes St. Theresa of Avila School for 60 Years of Catholic Education

Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa recognized St. Theresa of Avila School for sixty years of providing a Catholic education to the people of Ascension Parish.

According to the proclamation presented at the February 21 Ascension Parish Council meeting, in 1957 Archbishop Rummel urged then pastor Fr. Arthur Lieux to build a parochial school at St. Theresa of Avila in Gonzales. General O.J. Daigle chaired a committee which, with the assistance of the entire congregation, raised \$93,000 to build the school.

In January 1958 Fr. Lieux secured the support of the Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament to staff the school, and construction began on December 28, 1958. The Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament were Principals, Assistant Principals, teachers, aides, & nursery workers. This order of nuns was present from 1959 to 2014.

St. Theresa of Avila School opened with 4 grades in September 1959, with Sr. Maria Immaculata serving as the first principal, and four Sisters of MHS staffing the school; there was an initial enrollment of 276 students in four grades. In September 1966 St. Theresa became a junior high school with Sr. Maria Rosaria as the second principal; and in 1973 St. Theresa became an inter-parochial school when St. Mark church parish was established.

In 1980 Mr. Jay Sullivan became the second lay principal and made great advances at St. Theresa School: New library built (1981), Full Day Kindergarten opened (1982), School was air-conditioned (1982), After School Care opens (1986), Pre-Kindergarten began (1987), Apple Computer Lab Added (1991), Asbestos enclosed (1991), Gym opened (1992), Science Lab & Computer Lab (2001), Explore Feasibility of Enrollment Expansion (2001).

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As the population in Ascension Parish grew and the demand for catholic education rose, St. Theresa opened a third section of kindergarten in 1981, and a feasibility expansion study began with 6 pastors representing Holy Rosary, St Anne, St. Anthony, St. Gabriel, St. John, St. Mark and St. Theresa; a plan was formulated in 2001 for St. John the Evangelist in Prairieville to allow a pre-k program to move into its Education Center; a temporary partnership was established for the school years between 2003-2008 in order to provide time for a permanent solution for the increasing enrollment demands; in 2004 four classes of kindergarten were moved to St. John and the school program was named St. Theresa Early Learning Center, then becoming St. John Primary in 2006; Ms. Christine Musso was named Principal of St. Theresa in 2005 and remains in that role today.

The once St. Theresa of Avila School became the East Ascension/East Iberville Regional Catholic School Partnership in 2012.

The success of St. Theresa of Avila School began in 1958 with the support of many people working tirelessly to ensure the continued opportunity of a catholic education for those who desire it. This support continues today in the form of the permanent partnership of church, pastors, parents, parishioners, faculty, students, administration, support staff, and members of the community working together to ensure the development of “service to one another through catholic values as all strive for spiritual growth and academic excellence.”

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Photo - School representatives were present at the presentation of the Ascension Proclamation on Thursday, February 21, 2019. In the picture are those representing St. John Primary and St. Theresa Middle were the following: (first row) Landon Tate, Ellie Musso and Adler Musso; (2nd row) Parish President Kenny Matassa, Rilan Delaneuville, Allison Guidry, Rowan Bourque, Abby Guidry, and Benjamin Poche; (3rd row) Mrs. Edna Leary, Parish Councilman Dempsey Lambert, Mrs. Kim Naquin (Principal of St. John Primary), Richie Barney, Kiersten Leary, Kim Rome (Assistant Principal SJP/STA), and Mrs. Christine Musso (Principal of St. Theresa Middle; (4th Row) Councilmen Travis Turner, Bill Dawson, Oliver Joseph, Teri Casso, Daniel Satterlee, Benny Johnson, Randy Clouatre, Aaron Lawler, Todd Lambert, and John Cagnolatti.