



# 2016 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# About Ascension Public Schools



**The mission of Ascension Public Schools is to provide each student the high-quality education necessary to succeed in an ever-changing world.**

## Our Vision

Rigorous academic standards are the hallmark of our vision and philosophy. We are moving our district forward with the following goals:

- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Literacy and Numeracy
- High Quality Teachers
- Leadership Development
- High Graduation Rates/College and Career Readiness
- Assessment and Technology Implementation
- Support for Underperforming Schools
- Positive Behavior

## About the 2016 Community Report

The 2016 Report to the Community has been created and developed as part of our commitment at Ascension Public Schools to keep you informed of the progress of our school system, our talented teachers and our hard-working students.

The district is one of the highest performing school systems in the state, now ranking No. 4 among Louisiana's 70 school districts. In addition to earning an "A" in academic performance with a 107.3 District Performance Score, Ascension Public Schools remain accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which is a designation that is awarded to only those districts that meet a rigorous standard of excellence and accountability.

Ascension Public Schools are *Growing at the Pace of Excellence*. We invite you to take time to learn about our progress, and we welcome your feedback. Comments can be posted on our Facebook page or by calling the central office at 225-391-7000 or 225-257-2000.

## CONTACT US

### Board Members



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### Ascension Public Schools

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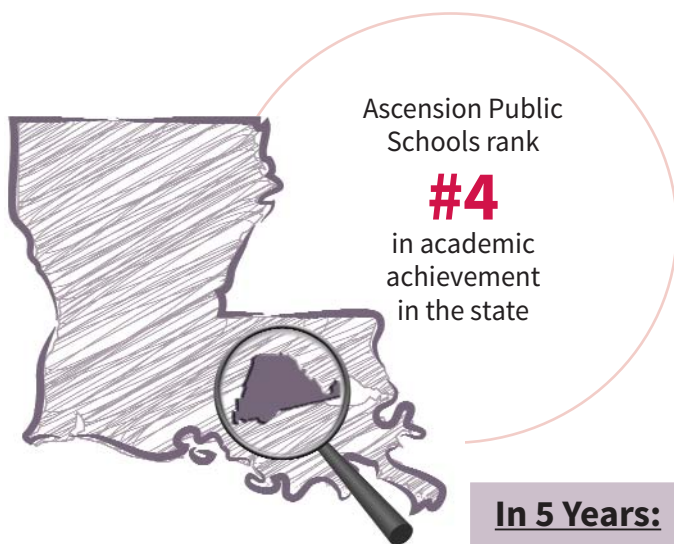
    Connect with us on social media



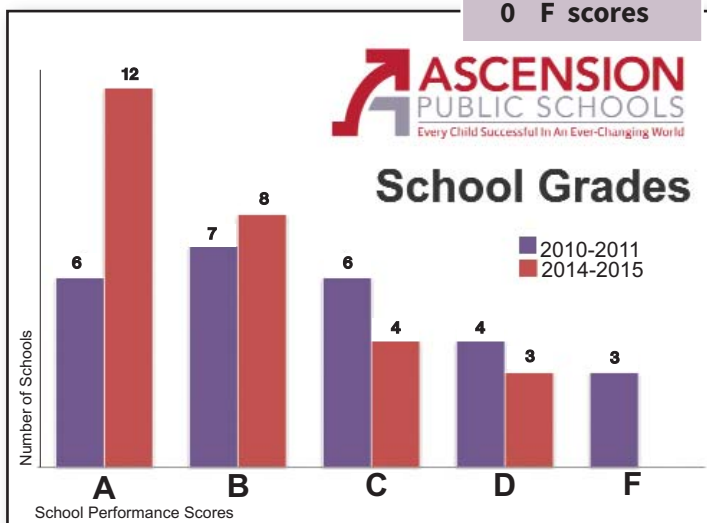
# Academic Honors and Recognition



Ascension Public Schools continues to earn the Louisiana Department of Education's highest grade for educational excellence



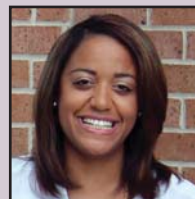
**In 5 Years:**  
+7 A/B scores  
-3 C/D scores  
0 F scores



## Our Outstanding Educators



**Brenden Simoneaux**  
President's Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching



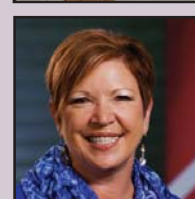
**Jaimee Williams**  
2016 Louisiana Principal of the Year Finalist for Gonzales Primary



**Danielle Delaune**  
Semi-finalist for 2016 Louisiana High School Teacher of the Year for St. Amant High



**Janet Brown**  
Louisiana Substitute Teacher of the Year for Kelly Staffing



**Patrice Pujol, Ed.D.**  
National Superintendent of the Year Finalist and Named President of National Institute for Excellence in Teaching

## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

**District Performance Score improved to 107.3, earning #4 state ranking**

**Two financial awards for accountability and management**

**12 "A" rated schools in 2016**

**High school students rank #1 in Louisiana for End of Course passage rates**

## Principals of the Year



**2014-15 PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR**  
From left: Gonzales Primary's **Jaimee Williams**, Galvez Middle's **Sandy Waguespack**, and St. Amant High's **Mia Edwards**

## Teachers of the Year



**2014-15 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR**  
From left: St. Amant High's **Danielle Delaune**, Pecan Grove Primary's **Julie Smith**, and Central Middle's **Tachelle Herbert**

## Students of the Year



**2014-15 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR**  
From left: St. Amant High's **Christopher Bourgeois**; Dutchtown Middle's **Hiba Hasan**; and St. Amant Primary's **Jake Rizzo**.

# Preparing Students for Tomorrow

Across the district, student achievement is the primary focus of all programs and initiatives. Major new career choices have been implemented for students to have access to college and career opportunities. Student success is achieved through high quality teaching and Ascension Public Schools has created innovative options for teacher enhancements and leadership development. Through these leadership enhancements, the district is continuously raising the bar for students. Below are examples of these achievements in action:



▲ The **National Institute for Excellence in Teaching** presented **Pecan Grove Primary** with the prestigious TAP Founder's Award in 2015. Each year, NIET recognizes one school for its exceptional efforts to implement and represent the principles of the Teacher Advancement System.



◀ Students at Prairieville Primary react to a science experiment. **All Ascension Public Schools are integrating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) activities into the day-to-day curriculum.** Some campuses also sponsor STEAM Clubs.

▶ Lake Elementary ELA teacher Heidi Maul helps a student work on the new Promethean ActivWall using her iPad. Every 5th through 12th grade student has a personal computing device.

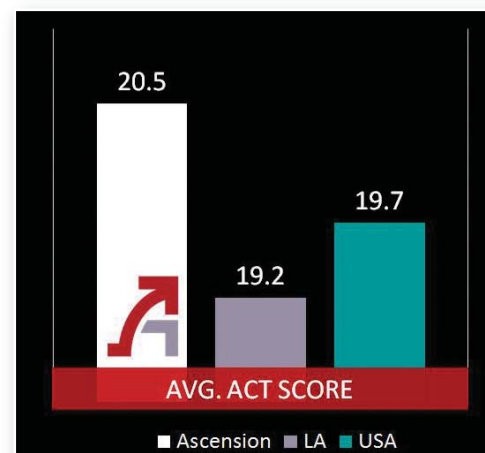
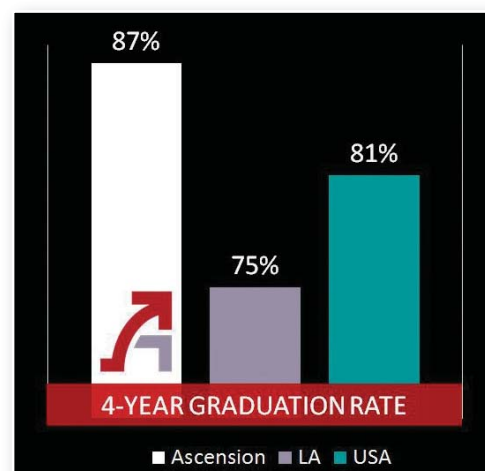


◀ The district created a two-year **Ascension Leadership Academy** that provides intensive training for potential school and district leaders to ensure effective leadership succession. Some of the teacher leaders from this program are also engaged in mentoring new teachers being certified through the Teach Ascension program.



## By the Numbers

- 6,313 dual enrollment hours earned in 2014-15
  - Southeastern Louisiana University
  - River Parishes Community College
  - Associated Builders & Contractors, Pelican Chapter
  - Baton Rouge Community College
- 33% of Ascension seniors who earned a diploma in 2013-14 also earned a career or technical certification (compared to 20% statewide)
- 639 Industry Based Certifications (IBC) earned by the Class of 2015







## New Communication Tools Used to Reach Our Communities

Communication is an important part of our effort to improve district performance. That's why Ascension Public Schools has created numerous outreach tools to engage students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, business partners and community neighbors.

Our website, **apsb.org**, is more interactive and easier to use, and we have engaged in popular social media to be more effective and timely in our efforts. A weekly electronic newsletter highlights events and progress of the district. The newsletter also provides links to other education news from the region and state for easy access to more indepth information. To sign up for the Ascension Public Schools e-news, go to **apsb.org** and submit your email information.



A special video tells how Ascension Public Schools has partnered with Associated Builders and Contractors for the career development program **Course Access** to offer students the technical training they need to gain skillful employment with local industries, which is projected to need some 80,000 employees over the next five years. The video can be viewed at **apsb.org** or by scanning the QR Code above to view on a mobile device.



## Our Students' Safety: A Priority of Ascension Public Schools

Ascension Public Schools has partnered with Innocent Eyes, a non-profit organization, to provide Internet safety and cyber bullying awareness to students and parents.

Officials have made presentations with Innocent Eyes to all middle and high school students in the district, as well as conducted evening seminars at three of the four parish high schools. The final seminar will be held at **Dutchtown High School** on **Feb. 25 at 6:30 p.m. for all parents** who have not yet attended a seminar. The event is sponsored by Cox Communications and is free and open to the public.

Other safety programs include anti-bullying efforts, school bus safety, and prom and graduation safety. The district supports safe and anonymous reporting and a commitment to properly investigate concerns and adopt measures to stop dangerous or undesired behaviors.

At the same time, the district has invested in security cameras at all campuses. Currently the district has nearly 1,200 cameras that record activity on the campuses 24 hours per day, seven days per week. A minimum of two weeks of recorded video is maintained for each camera at all times to assist in investigations.

### New Safety Cameras



**One-to-One Computers for Students**

# \$100 Million Capital Improvement Plan NEARING COMPLETION



**Ascension Parish voters extended a 15.08 millage in 2009 to improve and expand some of the parish's oldest school facilities. The capital improvements were made with NO increase in the amount taxpayers paid each year. Six years later, the investment is making a positive difference.**

## Major projects completed in the parish-wide plan include:

- ✓ Major "makeover" and renovations to Prairieville Middle School, Gonzales Primary School and Donaldsonville High School
- ✓ New architecturally-designed school building for G. W. Carver Primary School at a new campus site
- ✓ Begin construction of Freshman Academies at Dutchtown, East Ascension and St. Amant high schools
- ✓ Major electrical infrastructure upgrades to support technology and enhance new safety features
- ✓ Upgrade of the district's computer and data network for wireless technology, leading the way for the innovative rollout of a computer for every student
- ✓ Security cameras for ALL campuses for optimal safety oversight, two-way radio system for schools, and safety locks on all classroom doors

## Freshman Academies Coming Soon



**The Freshman Academies will increase capacity at each campus by 600 additional students. When combined (1800), it is nearly equivalent to the capacity of a new high school campus.**

Three new Freshman Academy facilities at East Ascension, Dutchtown and St. Amant high schools are currently under construction. Each new facility will house incoming ninth graders, allowing additional space for upper classmen. Research shows freshmen who are in separate major course classes perform better and adjust better to the rigors of high school, resulting in improved grades, better behavior and higher graduation rates.

Ascension Public Schools has provided freshmen with separate classes for the last three academic years to achieve these benefits. However, when the parish's sales tax revenues spiked due to the recent industrial expansion, school leaders combined those one-time funds with some capital improvement dollars to start constructing the new Freshman Academies.





Ascension Public Schools currently operate

**16** Primary and Elementary Schools

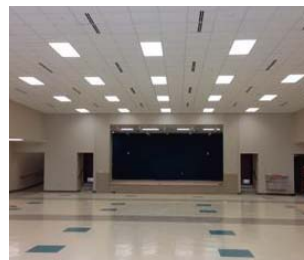
**7** Middle Schools

**4** High Schools

## Galvez Middle



## Prairieville Middle



## Gonzales Primary School







## St. Amant Middle



The district paid for improvements with the extension of an existing construction millage with **NO** increase in annual taxes.



St. Amant High Groundbreaking

## Donaldsonville High School



East Ascension High Groundbreaking

## G.W. Carver Primary School



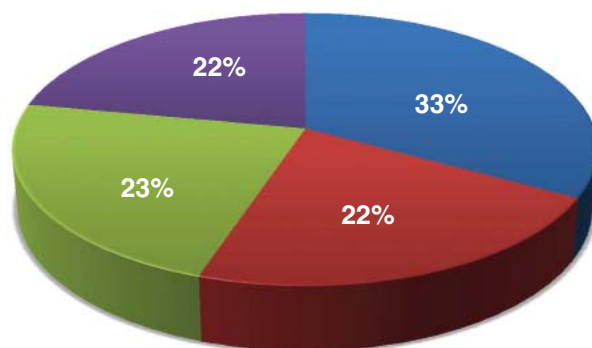
Dutchtown High Groundbreaking

Go to **[apsb.org/promises](https://apsb.org/promises)** for a complete list of all construction and renovation projects.



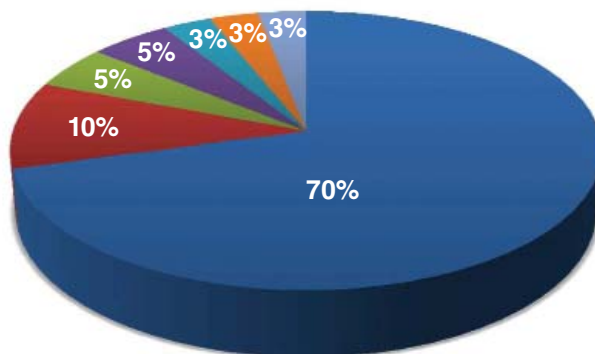
## The 2015-2016 Ascension Parish School System Budget is \$341 Million

- State Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Funds
- Parish Sales and Use Taxes
- Parish Ad Valorem Taxes
- Grants/Insurance Premiums/Capital Project Funds



**Total Revenues**

- Employee Salaries and Benefits
- Construction
- Operation & Maintenance
- Debt Service
- Substitutes & Other Professional Services
- Technology
- Equipment, Materials, Supplies



**Total Expenditures**



## Ascension Public Schools Recognized for Fiscal Excellence



Ascension Public Schools was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award and Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. This is the third

consecutive year the district has received the Budget Presentation Award, which is only earned by the top 2% of all government agencies in the United States.

## STANDARD & POOR'S

**AA Rating**

reflect the system's strong financial health and management. By earning a rating improvement, Ascension Public Schools will be eligible for a better interest rate on its bonds, thereby saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

In addition, Standard & Poor's increased the bond rating for Ascension Public Schools to AA to



## Frequently Asked Questions About the Bond Proposition

### Will the school bond proposition increase my taxes?

No! The bond proposition will extend an existing millage that is already being paid. Voters will continue to pay the same millage rate as they currently are paying.

### How long has the dedicated 15.08 mills been on the parish tax rolls?

Voters have repeatedly dedicated 15.08 mills or more to pay for school construction and improvements in Ascension Public Schools for more than 30 years.

### Why does the school system need the additional money?

The school district has seen nearly 500 to 600 new students enroll each year for more than 10 years. That growth is projected to continue at a steady pace. Parish government records show nearly 6,000 new homes have been approved in Ascension Parish, and those homes are in various planning stages of permitting and construction.

### Why is a new high school not being built as part of this bond proposition?

The school board is limited to borrowing \$120 million without increasing taxes. The greatest need at this time is at the lower grade levels – 3 new primary schools and 1 middle school are needed to alleviate overcrowding. At the same time, the district is constructing three new Freshman Academies at Dutchtown, East Ascension and St. Amant high schools that will increase capacity at each school by an additional 600 students. When combined, that added capacity (1,800) is nearly equivalent to the capacity of a new high school campus.

# School Construction Bond Election Vote April 9, 2016

Early Vote - March 26-April 2 (except Sunday),

8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Office of Registrar of Voters:

East Bank: Courthouse, 828 South Irma Blvd., Room 205, Gonzales

West Bank: Old Courthouse, 300 Houmas St., Suite B, Donaldsonville

The Ascension Parish School Board is asking voters to extend an existing 15.08 mills to fund much-needed construction projects and improvements across the district.

The dedicated millage has been **in effect for more than 30 years**. By extending the 15.08 millage rate through Year 2036, voters will enable Ascension Public Schools to borrow \$120 million for school improvements at **NO increased cost**.

Approval of the school bond proposition will NOT increase the amount of taxes paid each year. **IT IS NOT A NEW TAX!**

The following projects are included in the April 9 funding proposal:

## 2016 Bond Construction Projects:

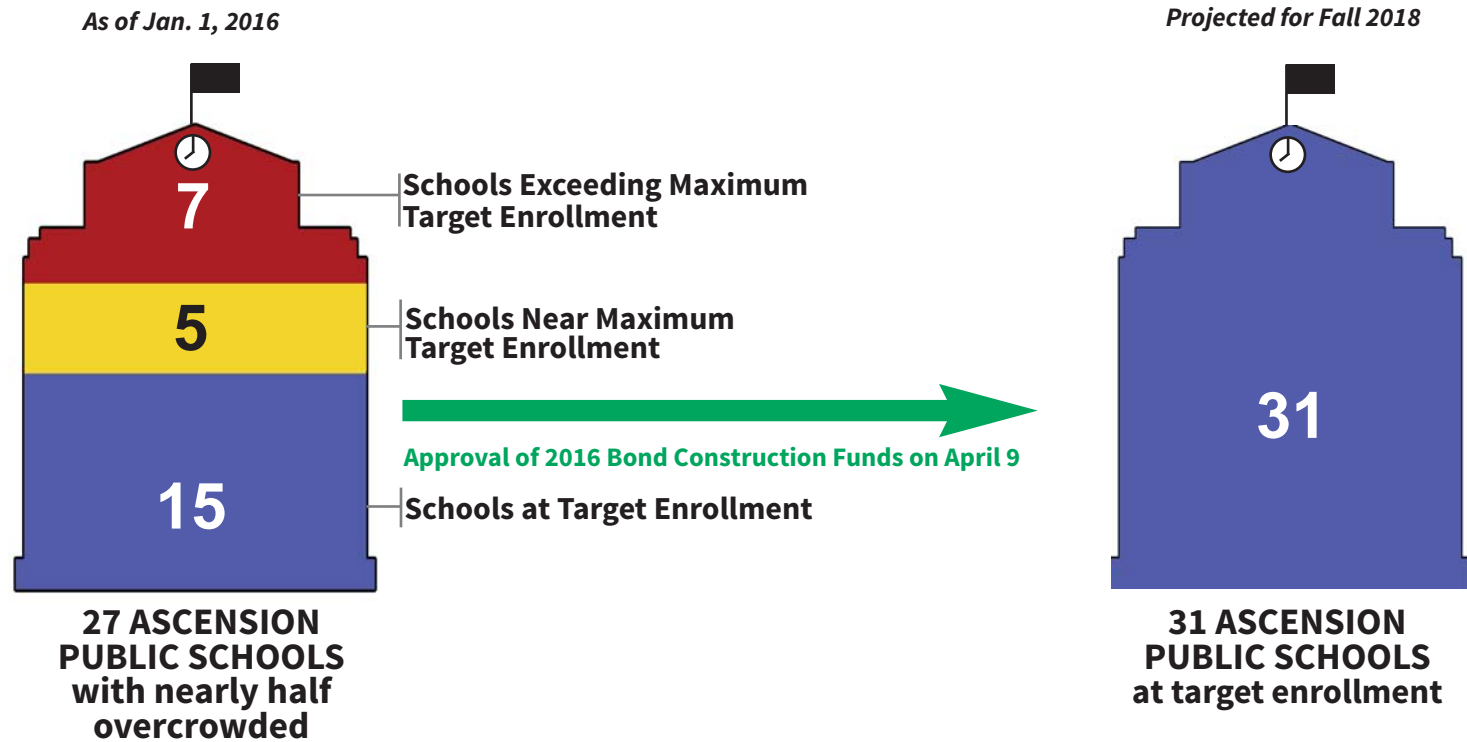
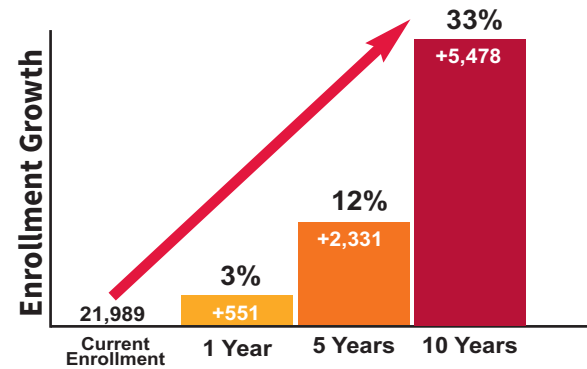
New Primary School – Bullion Crossing	\$16,100,000
New Primary School – Hwy 73	\$16,600,000
New Primary School – Germany Road	\$17,800,000
New Middle School – Bluff Road	\$29,300,000
Complete Freshman Academy Concept at High Schools	\$12,900,000
Future High School-Site Planning and Permitting	\$2,000,000
Addition/Renovations to Ascension Head Start in Donaldsonville	\$3,000,000
Addition/Renovations to Dutchtown Primary	\$7,400,000
Continue Security Plan Implementation at ALL campuses	\$3,000,000
Addition/Renovations to Lowery Middle School	\$3,900,000
Addition of Gym to Prairieville Middle School	\$3,000,000
Renovation of old Donaldsonville High Library into classroom/office space	\$500,000
APPLe Digital Academy	\$2,900,000
Exterior Covered Play Areas at ALL Primary Schools	\$1,600,000

**Total Investment \$120 million**  
*at NO Increased Cost to Taxpayers*





Ascension Public Schools is continuing to experience major growth. Based on the past 10 years, enrollment is expected to **increase by 33%** over the next decade. This unrelenting growth is a constant challenge. Currently, nearly half the district's schools are quickly approaching their maximum enrollment capacity or exceeding it! That's why the Ascension Parish School Board is asking voters to approve a bond proposition to fund the construction of 4 new schools and the planning phase for a future new high school.



At the same time, more than \$2 million of the new bond monies will be dedicated to the planning and preparation of a future high school.

The growth at the district's high school campuses is currently being addressed with the completion of Freshman Academies at Dutchtown, East Ascension and St. Amant high school campuses.

Freshman Academies will increase capacity at each campus for 600 additional students, when combined (1,800), is nearly equivalent to the capacity of a new high school campus.

**Vote April 9, 2016**

Visit [www.apsb.org/2016bond](http://www.apsb.org/2016bond) for more information

# Contact Information

## Ascension Public Schools K-12

<b>Central Middle (6-8)</b>	14101 Roddy Road Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-6400 225-621-2682-F
<b>Central Primary (K-5)</b>	41469 La Hwy 621 Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-7700 225-391-7701-F
<b>Donaldsonville High (9-12)</b>	100 Tiger Drive Donaldsonville, LA 70346	225-257-2900 225-473-4496-F
<b>Donaldsonville Primary (EC-2)</b>	38210 Hwy 3089 Donaldsonville, LA 70346	225-257-2600 225-473-6920-F
<b>Duplessis Primary (K-5)</b>	38101 Hwy 621 Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-6650 225-677-5984-F
<b>Dutchtown High (9-12)</b>	13165 Hwy 73 Geismar, LA 70734	225-391-6200 225-677-8191-F
<b>Dutchtown Middle (6-8)</b>	13078 Hwy 73 Geismar, LA 70734	225-391-7800 225-621-2351-F
<b>Dutchtown Primary (K-5)</b>	13046 Hwy 73 Geismar, LA 70734	225-391-7850 225-621-2383-F
<b>East Ascension High (9-12)</b>	612 East Worthy Road Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-6100 225-621-2397-F
<b>Galvez Middle (6-8)</b>	42018 Hwy 933 Prairieville, LA 70769	225-391-6350 225-621-2434-F
<b>Galvez Primary (K-5)</b>	16093 Henderson Bayou Rd. Prairieville, LA 70769	225-391-6600 225-621-2447-F
<b>Gonzales Middle (6-8)</b>	1502 W. Orice Roth St. Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-6450 225-621-2509-F
<b>Gonzales Primary (K-5)</b>	521 N. Burnside Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-6700 225-621-2663-F
<b>G.W. Carver Primary (K-5)</b>	11310 Legacy Oaks Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-6800 225-621-2556-F
<b>Lake Elementary (K-8)</b>	14185 Hwy 431 St. Amant, LA 70774	225-391-6550 225-621-2476-F
<b>Lakeside Primary (K-5)</b>	16500 Hwy 431 Prairieville, LA 70769	225-391-7750 225-391-7751-F
<b>Lowery Elementary (3-5)</b>	2389 B Hwy 1 S. Donaldsonville, LA 70346	225-257-2500 225-473-2539-F

<b>Lowery Middle (6-8)</b>	2389 A Hwy 1 S. Donaldsonville, LA 70346	225-257-2550 225-473-2514-F
<b>Oak Grove Primary (K-5)</b>	17550 Old Jefferson Hwy Prairieville, LA 70769	225-391-6750 225-621-2370-F
<b>Pecan Grove Primary (K-5)</b>	1712 S. Pecan Grove Ave. Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-7450 225-644-6985-F
<b>Prairieville Middle (6-8)</b>	16200 Hwy 930 Prairieville, LA 70769	225-391-6300 225-673-4883-F
<b>Prairieville Primary (K-5)</b>	40228 Parker Road Prairieville, LA 70769	225-391-7400 225-391-7401-F
<b>St. Amant High (9-12)</b>	12035 Hwy 431 St. Amant, LA 70774	225-391-6000 225-621-2573-F
<b>St. Amant Middle (6-8)</b>	44317 Hwy 429 St. Amant, LA 70774	225-391-6500 225-621-2593-F
<b>St. Amant Primary (K-5)</b>	44365 Hwy 429 St. Amant, LA 70774	225-391-7950 225-621-2613-F
<b>Spanish Lake Primary (K-5)</b>	13323 Bluff Road Geismar, LA 70734	225-391-7650 225-391-7651-F
<b>Sorrento Primary (K-5)</b>	42211 N. City Parc Dr. Sorrento, LA 70778	225-391-6900 225-391-6901-F

## Other Schools/Facilities

<b>LeBlanc Special Services &amp; Federal Programs</b>	611 North Burnside Gonzales, LA 70737	225-391-7211 225-391-7381 225-621-2534-F
<b>Ascension Head Start</b>	603 Lee Avenue Donaldsonville, LA 70346	225-391-7351 225-474-2752-F
<b>APPLE Digital Academy</b>	38608 Hwy 22 Darrow, LA 70725	225-391-6850 225-474-2774-F
<b>Early College Option River Parishes Community College</b>	925 W. Edenborne Pkwy. Gonzales, LA 70737	225-743-8747

Your direct connection to Ascension Public Schools

**[www.apsb.org](http://www.apsb.org)**



225-257-2000 | 225-391-7000

