

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 97

BY SENATOR CLAITOR

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate John L. Bennett for more than thirty years of outstanding accomplishments in education, his inspiring leadership of the faculty and students of St. Aloysius Catholic School and for his dedicated public service as a member of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

WHEREAS, John L. Bennett, a native and resident of Port Allen, Louisiana, has announced his retirement as principal of St. Aloysius Catholic School in Baton Rouge at the end of this school term, after serving as principal of the school for the last thirty years; and

WHEREAS, he attended Holy Family School in Port Allen in elementary school, graduated from Redemptorist High School in Baton Rouge, achieved bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Louisiana State University, earned an education specialist degree from LSU, and attained a master's in pastoral studies from Loyola University; and

WHEREAS, John Bennett began his career in education as a teacher at Port Allen High School in 1977, in 1980 was named the assistant principal of instruction at Port Allen Middle School, and in 1985, became principal of St. Aloysius Catholic School; and

WHEREAS, he is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a licensed professional counselor; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, he was selected as one of three principals of Catholic schools nationwide to receive a Distinguished Principal Award from the National Association of Elementary School Principals; and

WHEREAS, he was twice appointed to serve on the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education by Governor Bobby Jindal as the nonpublic school at-large member from 2008 to 2013; and

WHEREAS, he is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Middle School Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the National Catholic Education Association; and

WHEREAS, as principal he carried out the stated mission of St. Aloysius Catholic School - to educate the whole child in the Catholic tradition for a life of meaning and purpose; and

WHEREAS, John Bennett has been the guiding force in the implementation of the school philosophy:

"The primary purpose of St. Aloysius School is to prepare our children for life in a contemporary society. We strive to help each child achieve his/her maximum potential in spiritual, intellectual, social, artistic, and physical development. St. Aloysius focuses on providing a Catholic Christian community atmosphere of faith and love. Students are afforded opportunities to experience the presence of God in their lives, to strengthen their personal faith through worship experiences, and to develop moral and social conscience through service to others while growing in a sense of tolerance and understanding. To attain these goals, major emphasis is placed on the fact that each child is an individual with specific needs, interests, and abilities. In recognition of these individual differences, a wide range of learning experiences is provided to develop the positive aspects of each child's character."; and

WHEREAS, he fosters a sense of partnership among faculty, staff and the (church) parish and calls the school, its 1,194 students and over 100 faculty and staff, 67 of them teachers, a ministry of the St. Aloysius Catholic Church Parish; and

WHEREAS, he and the faculty bring fun and humor into their students' education, ranging from dressing up at Halloween, to playing music in the cafeteria, to bringing parents in for a major assembly on the first day of school complete with "song and dance and play and humor" while also serving as models of Christian and family values in school; and

WHEREAS, John Bennett meets with student advisers on a regular basis to discuss issues and the advisory board's students produced a school safety video that won a national award; and

WHEREAS, he and his wife, Debra, who teaches kindergarten at St. Aloysius Catholic School, married in 1976 and the family includes daughters Lindsey and husband Derek Templet, Lauren and husband Patrick O'Brien, and Lee Anne Bennett, together with seven grandchildren, and he plans to spend his retirement enjoying time with his

grandchildren while doing volunteer work at St. Aloysius Catholic Church Parish and School.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate John L. Bennett for more than thirty years of distinguished and exemplary service to education in Louisiana, particularly as principal of St. Aloysius Catholic School, and for his dedicated public service as a member of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and does recognize and record his notable accomplishments and manifold contributions to his community and the state, as well as the generous and admirable way in which he has devoted his energy and his talents to the full development of students into informed, capable, and productive citizens of their communities and the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to John L. Bennett.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE