

# HISTORY OF T.S. COOLEY

T.S. Cooley Elementary School was originally built in 1942 to serve the growing community of Lake Charles. The school continued as a traditional elementary school until 1983.

In 1982, the Calcasieu Parish School Board, acting under a consent decree, established a magnet program at JY Garber Elementary. School attendance zones in Ward 3 were also realigned at this time. The following year, JY Garber was closed, and the magnet program was moved to T.S. Cooley. Attendance was voluntary. Enrollment for the 1983-1984 school year was 180 students. During this time, the magnet program consisted of after school offerings with special teachers being brought in for the classes. The program continued in this manner until 1987.

A fundamental change was made to the magnet program beginning with the 1987-1988 school year. The after school classes were discontinued. The school day was lengthened to 375 minutes to include enrichment classes during daily classroom instruction. A team teaching approach was instituted in grades two through five. The enrollment at this time was 279 students.

Beginning with the 1988 - 1989 school year, entrance requirements were established with a 2.5 grade point average being the primary requirement. In addition, letter grades were to be awarded in all subjects. In April of 1988, the Calcasieu Parish School Board approved the assigning of letter grades in Physical Education, Fine Arts, and French. The board also established the integration of fine arts as the emphasis for T.S. Cooley Elementary Magnet School. In October of 1988, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education granted T.S. Cooley a permanent waiver of scheduled class time for Math and Physical Education to allow adequate scheduling of other classes at the school.

The school underwent renovation through the District 22 Bond Issue in 1989. This allowed for the establishment of a fully equipped art room, complete with computers for enhancement of student work, a kiln for firing of clay artwork, and adequate storage for the many art supplies needed. A music room was furnished inside the main building which allowed easier integration with regular classroom instruction. A library and computer lab were also constructed, as well as a multi-purpose room. These additions further broadened the magnet program.

Admission test guidelines and maintenance guidelines were also established during the 1989 - 1990 school year. Beginning with the 1990 - 1991 school term, students not maintaining the required 2.5 overall grade point average were removed from the magnet program. For entrance to Kindergarten, students were required to successfully complete the screening assessment administered prior to the beginning of school. Students were also required to successfully complete the approved achievement test for entrance to first through fifth grade. Spaces were filled according to the ranking of test scores. These guidelines are still in place today.

The magnet program has continued to evolve through the years. School enrollment for the current school year is 312 students. At this time there exists a dual emphasis of a strong academic program coupled with a strong fine arts program. The dedicated staff continues to embrace the uniqueness of the magnet program and its approach to educate the whole child.