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PRESS RELEASE

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District 205 Names New Administrators at Thornton Township High School

Maria Luiza Gonzalez and Roxie Thomas join the leadership team.

South Holland, IL – Thornton Township High School District 205 is pleased to announce the appointments of Maria Luiza “Marilu” Gonzalez and Roxie Thomas to administrative leadership positions at Thornton Township High School in Harvey, Illinois.

Gonzalez, a graduate of Thornridge High School, has assumed the role of assistant principal of Thornton Township High School in Harvey, where she was raised. She is the second Latina administrator in the history of District 205 and the first at Thornton Township High School. Upon accepting the position, Gonzalez stated, “It is not a matter of ambition but the strong sense of debt I feel I owe my community. We have an urgency to have decision making individuals that understand the Latino students, parents, community members, and businesses at any table within all educational levels in this dynamic community. Not because it is failing but because it is richly thriving.”

Gonzalez is a graduate of Chicago State University and Concordia University, where she earned a B.S. in Physical Education and M.A. in Educational Leadership, respectively. In March 2016, she was featured in a newsletter as an up and coming leader published by IALAS, the Illinois chapter of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. In 2019, Gonzalez was awarded the Cuahtemoc Leadership Community Award from the late Frank Zuccarelli at the Thornton Township Hispanic heritage month celebration.

Also joining the Thornton Township High School leadership team is Roxie Thomas in the position of principal emeritus. Thomas will serve as a mentor to Marilu Gonzalez.

Thomas has been an educator for more than four decades. She has served the education community with distinction as a teacher, dean of students, and an administrator at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Most recently, Thomas was principal at Whittier Elementary School in Harvey.

In 2005, she was instrumental in establishing the C.A.P.T.U.R.E. (Community and Parents, Teachers United to Redefine Education) Boys Mentoring program at Whittier School with the support of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Chi Lambda Lambda Chapter in 2005. Subsequently, she founded the C.A.P.T.U.R.E. Girls Mentoring program in 2007 with support from members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Most recently, she worked with Whittier School officials and the Harvey School District 152 Education Foundation to establish the Big Brother Little Brother’s Mentoring program for students ages six to 12

to provide support for younger boys who are at risk of not being successful in school. She received various honors from Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority for her work with the mentoring programs.

Thomas earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Union University in Jackson, TN, and a Master of Science in Education degree with many hours of advanced studies in Curriculum and Instruction from Arkansas State University.

“The experience Marilu Gonzalez will gain working in a high school leadership position, with Roxie Thomas serving as a mentor, is an opportunity for each of them to bring their strengths to the school’s administrative team, to experience new challenges, and to learn new approaches to leadership,” said Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr., Superintendent of Thornton Township High School District 205. “It is also an opportunity for our assistant principals to further develop as leaders in education.”

The new administration appointments are part of District 205’s long term strategy in preparing assistant principals for future leadership positions and also in expanding internal professional development opportunities that are in line with the district’s mission as a progressive learning organization.

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Picture 1:



Maria Luiza Gonzalez joins Thornton Township High School in Harvey, IL, as assistant principal.

Picture 2:



The appointment of Roxie Thomas expands District 205’s strategy to expand internal professional development opportunities.