

# History of St. Francis de Sales Catholic School

Ground breaking ceremonies for St. Francis de Sales Catholic School were held on September 19, 1963, one year after the parish was established by the Diocese. On September 8, 1964, the school opened its doors to 463 students in grades 1-6. The faculty included three Dominican sisters and ten lay teachers. Sister Justin Farinella, O.P. was principal, and Sister Mercedes Meyer, O.P. served as assistant principal. Father Albert Beck was the pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church at the time, and Father Anthony J. Plessala was the assistant pastor.

In the beginning, classes were large, with thirty or more students in each. There were three 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes, two 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes, and one class each for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, all in the main school building. Grades 7 and 8 were added during the following two years. To meet the growing needs of the parish, a second school building was opened in November of 1966, and in April of 1967 the school received its first accreditation by the Texas Education Agency, the entity responsible for school accreditations at the time. In May 1967 the first graduation took place.

On September 14, 1980, Bishop John L. Morkovsky, Bishop Joseph Fiorenza and Auxiliary Bishop John McCarthy celebrated the dedication of the new church building. The old church became the community center and school gym.

The school's mission was founded upon the principle of "Veritas." The Dominican motto, "Veritas" or "Truth," is based on the underlying philosophy of all Dominican education that "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The courses of study selected for those early years were chosen to discover and develop the potential and talents of every boy and girl to the fullest. That first mission statement is still the foundation of St. Francis de Sales School today, as we strive to educate each student in a spirit of faith and academic excellence according to Roman Catholic principles. As part of a caring but disciplined community, our school, in partnership with parents, nurtures and challenges each student to develop to his or her fullest potential.

St. Francis de Sales Catholic School offers a comprehensive curriculum designated to meet the academic needs of each student. In addition to basic studies, the school provides additional studies in the areas of art, music, Spanish, physical education, computer, and speech. The school has successfully maintained its accreditation throughout its existence, and continues its work to maintain the highest academic standards.