

# Calcasieu Parish School System History

1803	Napoleon Bonaparte sold Louisiana to the United States, and United States citizens pushed the Louisiana boundary westward to the Sabine River.
1807	Louisiana was divided into twelve parishes. The area from the Atchafalaya River to the Sabine River was included in St. Landry Parish.
1812	Louisiana was admitted to the Union.
1819	The first formal school in Lake Charles of any kind was taught by Thomas Rigmaiden in the home of Jacob Ryan.
1819	A state legislative act was passed that enacted an annual appropriation of \$600 to each parish except Orleans for the support of schools. The Police Jury had jurisdiction over the funds in each parish.
1820	Samuel Adams Kirby erected a one-room log building near the corner of Ryan and Kirby Streets and opened the first school in Lake Charles where children were taught in a separate building. The private school movement developed until 1880 and then began to decline. When public money was available, state and parish funds paid private tuition costs for needy children. By 1890 the public schools were able to serve the children and the private school movement ended. The literature cited many private schools and teachers in Lake Charles and Calcasieu Parish during this period.
1821	A state legislative act empowered the police jury of each parish to select five administrators of public schools. This act also provided for financial support of schools by authorizing each police jury to levy taxes for the promotion of education in the parish.
March 24, 1840	Governor A. B. Roman signed the Louisiana legislative act that created old Imperial Calcasieu Parish (present day Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jefferson Davis Parishes).
Nov 2, 1841	The first police jury was elected in Calcasieu Parish, and that body immediately appointed a five-member school board: Thomas Bilbo, Christopher Hicks, Michael Pithon, William Foreman, and James Buchanan.
1845	The Constitution of Louisiana was adopted and included the powers of government regarding public schools
June 8, 1846	The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury authorized the office of Parish Superintendent of Public Schools.
1846	The Police Jury appointed Samuel Adams Kirby the first Parish Superintendent of Schools in Imperial Calcasieu Parish for a one-year period with an annual salary of \$50, payable quarterly.
1847	The office of parish superintendent of schools was authorized by Louisiana legislative act, and duties were set forth.
1847	A Louisiana legislative act provided for financial support of schools: a state levy of one cent tax on all assessed property for school support; each parish would receive 90% of all poll taxes paid in that parish; proceeds from the sale of school lands were to be deposited with the state treasurer where they were to draw 6% interest for benefit of public schools; and the sixteenth section in each township was the property of the parish in which it was located.
January 1855	The earliest annual report concerning education in Imperial Calcasieu Parish was submitted by Ansel Sallier, Calcasieu Parish Treasurer, and was included in the

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	Annual Report for 1854 made by State Superintendent of Public Education J. N. Carrigan to the General Assembly of Louisiana. The report showed 13 districts in the parish with a total enrollment of 784. The number of pupils in each district ranged from 29 to 116. Parish teachers were paid a total of \$4,229.59, of which \$65 came from private subscriptions.
1856	The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury delegated authority to the parish superintendent to issue certificates to teachers within the parish and created a board of examiners: Charles A. Hardy, William Haskell, Sam N. Nolley.
1869	The Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Education stated that Calcasieu Parish had 2,536 school-age children, but not a single public school.
1870	Cameron Parish was severed from Imperial Calcasieu by legislative act. Imperial Calcasieu then consisted of present-day Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis Parishes.
January 1871	State Superintendent of Public Education Thomas W. Conway's Annual Report to the General Assembly of Louisiana included a report from Calcasieu Parish Treasurer J. W. Bryan. The report, though incomplete, did list the number of children age 3s six through 21 years in nine districts.
1871	The school board was empowered to elect its own officers, the president and the secretary, the latter to serve as parish superintendent.
1871	The parish board authorized the president and secretary of the board to appoint three trustees for each school on recommendations of the teachers and patrons of the school, such trustees to be assigned the task of superintending the school and making monthly certified reports on its condition.
1871	The importance of the school board had come to be recognized, and the "School Board Proceedings" appeared separately from Police Jury Minutes in the <i>Lake Charles Echo</i> .
1872	The Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Education said that a school board had been organized in Calcasieu Parish, with John S. Spence as president and A. H. Moss secretary-treasurer. It was unofficially reported that there were 23 public schools with a combined enrollment of 523 pupils in the parish. Teachers were appointed by the president of the Board. Most of the schools were funded by private subscription.
1875	State Superintendent of Public Education William G. Brown included a report from Calcasieu in his Annual Report to the General Assembly of Louisiana for the Year 1874. The Calcasieu report listed Hon. Jno. A. Spence, president and A. H. Moss, secretary and treasurer. This report indicated 819 pupils attended school in 25 schools in the parish that year. Several schools and teachers were cited by name, among them the schools of "Mrs. L. Landry and Miss McClelland" in Lake Charles. The report stated that several buildings in the parish had been "erected by neighborhood energy, without any charge to the board, and in no case has rent been demanded for the use of school rooms."
1876	The Annual Report of the Year 1875 submitted by State Superintendent of Public Education William G. Brown to the General Assembly of Louisiana in 1876 included a detailed report from Calcasieu, Jno. A. Spencer (sic), President, and A. H. Moss, Secretary and Treasurer.

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1876	John McNeese moved to Lake Charles from Hickory Flats, near Oberlin, and began teaching a private school. He had taught in private schools in the parish for three years before he moved to Lake Charles, having come to Louisiana from Menard County, Texas in 1873.
1877	A legislative act provided for the appointment of the parish board by the state board of education.
1877	A legislative act provided for a parish superintendent whose salary should be limited to \$100. His title was "Secretary of the Board and Ex Officio Superintendent."
July 16, 1877	The Parish Board of School Directors for Calcasieu Parish was organized: President – J. W. Bryan, Secretary – S. D. Read, Other Members – Wm. G. Gill, David D. Andrews, Chas. C. Chaney, Levi Elander, James Cole, Brown Wilburn, Thos. Lyons. This information was recorded in the Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Education, Robert M. Lusher, to the General Assembly of Louisiana for the Year 1877, along with a brief statistical report on Calcasieu Parish Public Schools, a listing of teachers, and remarks submitted by S. B. Read, Secretary. Mr. Read's comments cited a lack of data to report properly. A financial report on parish public schools for the years 1876 and 1877 was submitted by Wm. L. Hutchins, the Calcasieu Parish Treasurer.
1878	The Parish Board of School Directors for Calcasieu Parish voted to give the superintendent a yearly stipend of \$100.
1879	The Constitution of 1879 increased the maximum salary of the parish superintendent to \$200 annually. S. D. Read was the first to receive this salary. The Constitution provided that poll tax receipts and the proceeds from sale of school lands and vacant lands be set aside for public schools. Police juries were authorized to appropriate money to the public schools provided they kept within the parish taxation limit. Authority was given to the voting of special taxes for building purposes.
1880	The private school movement began to decline in the parish
1880-1892	Captain J. W. Bryan, editor of the <u>Lake Charles Echo</u> , wrote several editorials regarding educational needs in Lake Charles. One issue recorded that S. O. Shattuck wished to have a special tax levied to support the schools.
1881	Calcasieu was mentioned in the Biennial Report of Robert M. Lusher, State Superintendent of Public Education, to the General Assembly of Louisiana for the Years 1880-1881, though no statistical report was submitted by T. F. Bell, secretary to the school board.
Sept. 11, 1882	St. Charles Academy of Lake Charles was opened for girls under the supervision of the Sisters Marianites of the Holy Cross. This was the beginning of Catholic parochial schools in the parish. In March, 1883, a parochial Boys School was begun.
1883	Calcasieu Parish was mentioned in the Biennial Report of Robert M. Lusher, State Superintendent of Public Education, for the years 1882-1883, but no statistical report was submitted by John H. Poe, school board secretary.
1883	John McNeese was appointed a member of the Calcasieu Parish Board of School Directors by the State Board of Education. He had taught nearly ten years in

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	various schools in the parish, the last one having been on LeBleu farm in the Chloe community. There were reportedly four or five public schools in Calcasieu, a territory which covered 3,650 square miles. Three of the public schools were those located at Bayou D'Inde, Sugartown and one held in the Methodist Church in Lake Charles.
1884-1887	The Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Education to the General Assembly for the Years 1884, 1885, 1886, and 1887 included statistical reports for the Parish of Calcasieu submitted by "... John H. Poe, Parish Superintendent." Mr. I. D. Bayne wrote in his 1933 thesis, however, "... Mr. Poe, himself, states that he was never elected Superintendent by the School Board, that he was only secretary of the Board."
1887	The Police Jury made its first donation of tax money to the public schools in Calcasieu Parish. The amount was \$3000.
Nov. 11, 1887	The earliest existing minutes of the Calcasieu Parish Board of School Directors on file in the present Calcasieu Parish School Board office, 1724 Kirkman Street, Lake Charles, were recorded on this date by John H. Poe, Secretary. The minutes cited the acceptance of a letter of resignation from John McNeese as a member of the Board. Members present were: J. W. Bryan, President; Jno. H. Poe, Secretary; Thos. Klienpeter, J. P. Geary, A. Rigmaiden. Absent: E. A. Perkins, J. J. Lyles, Jno. McNeese.
1887	John McNeese graduated with a Bachelor of Laws degree from Tulane. While teaching, he had undertaken the study of law in the office of Judge G. A. Fournet. He moved his family to New Orleans for a time while he attended law school prior to the awarding of the law degree.
1888	A Louisiana legislative act was passed which provided that members of a school board should hold office for a period of four years and should have the following powers and duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To sue and be sued</li> <li>To hold property</li> <li>To elect a president and parish superintendent</li> <li>To apportion the parish funds among the individual schools</li> <li>To visit schools or to appoint a visiting board for this purpose</li> </ul>
Sept. 8, 1888`	John McNeese, a member of the newly-appointed school board, was unanimously elected Parish Superintendent, as recorded in the minutes on file in the Calcasieu Parish School Board office. Members of the newly-appointed Board present on this date were: Prof. A. Thomson, elected Permanent Chairman; W. H. Harris, C. D. Welsh, J. W. Austin Nichols. There were 40 schools in the parish.
1888	The Calcasieu Parish Board of School Directors purchased the block of land on which Central School now stands in Lake Charles. The property was purchased from J. B. Watkins for \$800.
1889	The Calcasieu Parish Board of School Directors awarded contracts totaling \$5,499 for materials and labor to construct a two-story frame building, 40 feet wide by 80 feet long, on the property purchased from J. B. Watkins.
Oct. 28, 1890	The Lake Charles Central and High School was officially named and was established as the second high school in the parish by resolution of the Board,

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	retroactive to October 1, 1890. Professor O. S. Dolby was its first principal. (Sugartown had been designated the first high school in the parish by resolution of the Board the preceding year.)
July 7, 1906	Louisiana Legislative Act No. 90 created a City School System in Lake Charles.
April 19, 1907	The Lake Charles City School System was separated from the Calcasieu Parish School System by resolution of the parish board, based on Louisiana Act No. 90 of 1906.
1913	Imperial Calcasieu was divided into the present parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis by a legislative act passed in 1912. John McNeese retired from his position as Superintendent.
1967	Lake Charles City School System was merged with Calcasieu Parish Schools under a single board.