



KENILWORTH SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

7600 Boone Ave, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

Phone : 1-225-766-8111 • Fax : 1-225.767.9061

web : www.kenilworthst.org

Kenilworth earns double-digit growth in state scoring

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News Release

In just four years, Kenilworth Science and Technology Charter School has gone from one of the lowest-performing schools in East Baton Rouge Parish to one of the highest-performing open-enrollment middle schools in the parish, according to data released Thursday by the Louisiana Department of Education.

Four years ago, only four of 10 Kenilworth students performed at grade level, the school had an "F" on its state report card, and the state was taking over management of the failing public school. Today, as a state-sanctioned charter school, Kenilworth is flourishing; the number of students performing at or above grade level has risen by 46 percent, Kenilworth has been designated as a "Top Gain" school, and the 2013 growth school performance score is 75.2, which is a "C."

Other facts about Kenilworth's growth SPS score:

- The 2013 score represents a 17.8 percent increase over KST's 2012 score.
- Kenilworth is in the top 5 percent in growth of all public and charter schools in Louisiana.
- Among public middle schools that are 100 percent open enrollment schools, Kenilworth now has the second highest school performance score in East Baton Rouge Parish.
- This is the fourth consecutive year of growth for Kenilworth, beginning with the 2009-10 school year, when the school was converted to a charter school and only 40 percent of the students were at grade level. Data from 2013 show 59.4 percent of the students now meet or exceed grade level.

"Kenilworth faculty and staff work together in a data-driven approach to help students achieve, and we aggressively reach out to parents to make them part of the team," said Dr. Karen Fontenot, interim dean of Southeastern Louisiana University's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and a member of Kenilworth's school board. "The result is that students who once struggled are now learning because there's a team giving them confidence and pushing them to excel."

Kenilworth has a curriculum focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, also known as STEM, and the school has incorporated STEM studies into extracurricular activities and after-school clubs. Kenilworth hosted Baton Rouge's first-ever STEM Expo in 2012, and is hosting a statewide STEM Expo on November 2. The school also sponsors an annual elementary mathematics contest and is an active member of L-STEM, the statewide STEM initiative.

"What is happening at Kenilworth is a remarkable story and a testament to how

committed educators can make a difference in how students learn," said Sandra Purcell, a member of Kenilworth's school board. "More than 90 percent of Kenilworth's students are on free or reduced-price lunch, and they are improving academically at one of highest rates in Louisiana."

Dr. Orhan Kizilkaya, president of the school board, said another reason behind Kenilworth's success is that, as a charter school, administrators and teachers have more latitude to experiment with teaching methods and materials and make decisions on a hyper-local level.

"The structure of a charter school gives us the flexibility to make changes that will benefit students without going through a large bureaucracy," said Dr. Kizilkaya, who also is a research associate at LSU's Center for Advanced Microstructures and Devices. "That's the purpose of a charter school, to experiment and find quick ways to turn a school around. That's what we've done at Kenilworth."

Kenilworth Science and Technology Charter School is a charter school under the state of Louisiana's Recovery School District. Formerly a part of the East Baton Rouge Parish school system, Kenilworth was converted to a charter school in 2009 and is operated by a Louisiana-based, non-profit school board as a state-sanctioned charter school. Kenilworth has produced four consecutive years of improvement in school performance scores and in LEAP test scores. Specifically, the percentage of students performing at grade level for all grades and subjects grew from 40.6 percent in 2009 to 59.4 percent in 2013.

For more information...

Contact Mark Lambert, Lambert Media

[225-937-8113](tel:225-937-8113)

lambertmedia@eatel.net

www.lambert-media.com

