

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ST. THERESA CATHOLIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCES NEW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR FOR 2022-23

January 18, 2022, Des Moines, IA — St. Theresa Catholic Parish and School, located at 5810 Cara Carpenter Avenue, is pleased to announce that Gretchen Watznauer will be its new school administrator for the 2022-2023 school year. Watznauer brings more than 25 years of experience in education, having served as an assistant administrator at St. Francis of Assisi, a classroom teacher for Des Moines Public Schools and Waukee Community Schools, and a program coordinator with the Iowa Department of Education.

Watznauer earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Family and Consumer Sciences from Iowa State University, a Master of Education and Effective Teaching degree from Viterbo University, and holds an Advanced Certificate of Study in Educational Leadership PK-12 and Principal/PK-12 Special Education Supervisor from the University of Northern Iowa. As a leader in Catholic education, she has facilitated data-driven professional development on professional learning communities, multi-tiered systems of support, and positive behavior interventions and support, including the implementation of restorative practices to address student behaviors and improve student outcomes. During her tenure as assistant principal at St. Francis of Assisi, Watznauer was integral to the school's application and attainment of its most recent Blue Ribbon Designation Award from the U.S. Department of Education. In addition to her academic expertise, Watznauer brings a wealth of experience in youth mentorship, leading retreats and service-learning as the current Youth Director at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Granger, IA where she has helped form young parishioners in their faith for the past three years.

"All students can learn at high levels when challenged and supported. Growth comes from clear expectations, acknowledging what others do well and specific feedback for growth," said Watznauer. "I believe a rigorous academic atmosphere rich in religious education and servant leadership opportunities prepares a strong foundation for children where their knowledge and skills will guide them in becoming successful adults. I look forward to continuing this tradition of academic excellence and faith formation at St. Theresa Catholic School."

"Gretchen is a motivational and passionate leader who actively engages with teachers and students," said Donna Bishop, Superintendent of Schools. "Her knowledge of academic best practices coupled with her enthusiasm for Christ-centered learning will be a tremendous blessing to the entire St. Theresa community."

Watznauer will assume her role as administrator of St. Theresa Catholic School on July 1, 2022.

St. Theresa Catholic School serves 300 students in grades PK-8. Recognized locally, nationally and internationally for its fully-integrated STEM education, St. Theresa strives to inspire creative thinking, justice and compassion, and help students build self-confidence and respect for others. To learn more, visit sainttheresaiowa.org/school.

The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools includes 16 schools in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa. Catholic schools in the Des Moines Diocese build Christ-centered, collaborative, inclusive partnerships with parents, students, and parishes to provide innovative academic excellence and inspirational faith formation for students. To learn about more Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines, visit www.dmdiocese.org/catholic-schools or email ExpectMore@dmdiocese.org.

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