



# Announcement



# DE LA SALLE ACADEMY

Dear DLSA Community,

This past year, De La Salle Academy marked its 35th anniversary. And while the onset of the pandemic made it impossible to celebrate this remarkable milestone in person, nothing could dim the joy and gratitude that we felt for all of the people — alumni, parents, friends, and supporters in the school and throughout our wider community — who have helped make DLSA one of the best middle schools in the city, and, indeed, the country. I've been particularly proud of how the school has navigated the COVID-19 crisis under the leadership of our Principal, Dr. Angel Gonzalez '99, and our devoted faculty and administrators. Thanks as well to the dedication and resourcefulness of our students and their families. Live God in our hearts!

The anniversary reminded me once again of how DLSA began. I've told this story before (you all know me!), but it bears repeating. I was on a one-hundred-day spiritual retreat outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1979. A few nights before we ended, at 2:00 o'clock in the morning, I felt a calling and climbed into the hills overlooking the retreat center. The sky was vast and bright with stars, and I found myself engaged with God in a dialogue. I was 36 years old, and anxious about the future. My productive years were ahead of me, but I did not know what they held.

I asked what God wanted from me. And I heard a voice telling me to start a school for academically talented middle-school children from low-income and working-class families. I understood that I was being asked to replicate the Monsignor Kelly School, where I had begun my teaching career a decade earlier. I had no money or resources, but I had surrendered my future to God and trusted my path going forward. I was not afraid to take risks and was fearless in asking for help, because I had the firm belief that I was in good hands and was being guided by the Holy Spirit. With the aid of some former students from Kelly, who were just starting their own careers, things took shape quickly. In September, 1984, we opened our doors on the top floor of Holy Name School on 97<sup>th</sup> Street and Amsterdam Avenue for fifty-three sixth and seventh graders. We had hopes and dreams but no idea of what the future held: The Holy Spirit took it from there.

In my daily prayer and conversation with God during this current time of crisis, I have once again been asked to listen to the Spirit. In recent years, I have focused much of my effort on securing the future of DLSA. Even before the pandemic, economic and other issues threatened many schools; Catholic schools continue to close at an unprecedented rate, for example. We at De La Salle are strong, and want to keep it that way.

To ensure a thriving future, I have become convinced that it is now time to turn the leadership of the school over to new, younger hands. The Board of Trustees and I have discussed succession plans over the years, and we firmly believe that this is the ideal moment to begin the transition to new leadership that will allow us to continue growing the mission safely. So, at this time, I am announcing my retirement at the end of the current school year. As God would have it, we are in a wonderful situation for this transition. Over the past two years, a strong team of new leaders has emerged that has led the school academically, spiritually, and professionally.

Therefore, I am delighted to tell you that Dr. Angel Gonzalez '99 will become Head of School as of September 1, 2021. This position, newly created by the Board, will encompass his current role as Principal, running the day-to-day operation of the school, and will also incorporate many of the other duties and responsibilities that I have carried out as President. I will work closely with Dr. Gonzalez, mentoring him in the responsibilities that will come with the transition. As I help to guide Dr. Gonzalez over the coming months, I will transition out of my role, becoming President Emeritus. This will be my last year in an administrative role at the school, although, as President Emeritus, I will continue to serve on the Board, and will be available as a consultant to the school as requested.

My confidence comes from having known my successor, Angel Gonzalez, for 24 years — since he first climbed those steep stairs to the fourth floor at the age of 11. He embraces, and is fully committed to, both the practical and the spiritual foundations of a community in the Lasallian tradition. He has lived the mission, and he has experienced the power of the core values upon which De La Salle is built: teaching to the mind, heart, and spirit of the children confided to our care. Angel was born in Colombia, raised in the Bronx, and graduated from De La Salle in the class of 1999. He is a born educator, who studied at Hunter College before earning his M.A. and Ph.D. in education at the University of California, Berkeley. After returning to New York, he taught at Hunter and then joined DLSA as a teacher in American Studies. He knows all facets of our school, having also served as Academic Dean and Director of Admissions. While continuing to teach, he has been Principal since 2018. With Dr. Gonzalez, I feel the Holy Spirit has

been at work on our behalf. If it were not too corny, I might have said God sent us an Angel.

I feel blessed that my personal faith journey will have achieved all that God asked of me that cold and star-filled night long ago in Santa Fe. I am confident that the faith journey that is De La Salle will continue, that the school will remain a beacon to all, as a community deeply rooted in the tradition of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, and that it will ensure that the children and families we serve are our top priority.

Please join me in thanking God for all of the gifts of the students, families, faculty, donors, and members of the Board that have played a part in living and growing the mission of De La Salle. Join me also in praying for Dr. Gonzalez and our leadership team as they accept the mission to continue making De La Salle a great school and community where issues of the mind, heart, and spirit transform the lives of the children we serve. We could not have achieved so much for our children without the help and prayers of all the members of the De La Salle family.

Finally, please keep me in your prayers as I continue responding to God's continuing call to be of service to the De La Salle family.

Love,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brian Carty". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'B'.

Brother Brian Carty, FSC  
Founder and President



# DE LA SALLE ACADEMY

Dear DLSA Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of De La Salle Academy, we would like to announce Brother Brian Carty's retirement at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. The Board is indebted to him for his foresight in founding our school and for thirty-six years of inspired leadership, commitment, and devotion to De La Salle Academy (DLSA).

Against all odds, Brother Brian opened a small middle school in 1984 without enough money to operate beyond Christmas. Thirty-seven years later, the school has transformed the lives of over 1,700 graduates and is well positioned to continue the mission to serve "academically talented, economically less advantaged children of diverse backgrounds a life-changing educational experience in grades 6-8, where they are empowered to reach their full potential."

Brother Brian has led the school through its inception, spearheaded the fundraising that made it financially stable, shepherded it through a major relocation of the facility, and guided us through any number of other hurdles and challenges with humor, grace, and compassion. He has created a unique and diverse community which has a lasting impact on every individual who has been fortunate enough to join it throughout the years. Anyone who has had the privilege to meet Brother Brian can attest to his unwavering and selfless dedication to the students and families of De La Salle.

The alumni have gone on to top rated high schools, boarding schools, and colleges/universities at a rate that parallels the best independent schools in the country. These young people have been inspired to become leaders, to make a difference in the world, and pursue careers in the fields of medicine, law, education, science, finance, and technology, among many others. They are all part of the growing De La Salle family. Brother Brian refers to all his students (past and present) as "his children". Although Brother Brian will be leaving his daily duties, he will remain close to the school as an advisor and consultant, President Emeritus, and a valued Board Member.

Brother Brian's commitment to providing a quality education balanced with fostering a sense of community to a diverse student population did not stop with De La Salle Academy. Among his other accomplishments Brother Brian founded George Jackson Academy in 2003, a middle school serving talented boys from underserved neighborhoods. He was also a founding Board Member of the Brilla Network of Public Charter Schools for Grades K – 8 in the South Bronx, and he is Co-Founder of the Franciscan Community Center serving the low-income community on the Upper West Side. During his longstanding career, he has served on numerous Boards, including the Summerbridge Program at Riverdale Country School, the Summer on the Hill Program at Horace Mann, St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School, Notre Dame School, Cristo Rey High School, and served as a trustee of the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS). Additionally, Brother Brian was awarded an honorary doctorate from La Salle University.

We are delighted to announce that as of September 1, 2021, Dr. Angel Gonzalez '99 will become Head of School for De La Salle Academy and will assume full responsibility for the operation of the school.

Dr. Gonzalez is a 1999 graduate of De La Salle Academy and has been a teacher and administrator at the school for eight years. He received his B.A. at Hunter College before earning his M.A. and Ph.D. in education at the University of California, Berkeley. He began his career teaching at Hunter College and then joined DLSA as a history teacher in American Studies. As an alum, teacher, and in his roles as the Academic Dean and Director of Admissions, he brings with him a deep understanding of all the facets and complexities of the daily operations of De La Salle. For the last two years, Dr. Gonzalez has been Principal of DLSA.

Dr. Gonzalez embodies the spirit and ethos of the school. He understands and knows firsthand the benefit of the exceptional education he received in combination with the core values he learned of care, support, and respect that have stayed with him throughout his life. Furthermore, the sense of community that was cultivated when he was a student continues and remains at the forefront of Dr. Gonzalez's leadership as Principal.

Dr. Gonzalez has worked directly with the Board in his role as Principal and we have been impressed with his strategic vision and his running of the day to day affairs of the school. During COVID-19, Dr. Gonzalez stepped in and took charge of the crisis management at the school. He assembled a task force made up of individuals with the specific skills needed to assess our situation, which included facility issues, medical

considerations, technology requirements for teaching remotely, legal issues, and staffing requirements. His leadership and tireless hours of work during the time of pandemic resulted in the best possible outcome for the entire DLSA community. We are confident in his stewardship and ability to lead the school as it continues to evolve and move forward continuing the legacy of Brother Brian Carty, FSC.

The Board looks forward to working with Dr. Gonzalez to ensure a smooth transition and stellar future for the school.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signatures of Ronald S. Rolfe and Leslie Schine in cursive script.

Ronald S. Rolfe and Leslie Schine  
Co-Chairs of the Board of Trustees  
De La Salle Academy