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Media Advisory

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****PHOTO ATTACHED****

Left to right, starting in the back row: Paul Pastorek, Xavier Darcos, Laure Darcos;
front row: students Jada Laird, Donald Dunbar, Chase Stuckey, Nathan Welch and Mira Bhayroo.

South Boulevard Students Present For French Accord Signing

Baton Rouge, La. – Students from South Boulevard Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet School’s French Program attended the official signing of the France-Louisiana Cooperation Accords at the Governor’s mansion Thursday, September 25. The students presented gifts to Pierre Vimont, the French ambassador to the United States, and Xavier Darcos, the French minister of National Education.

Nathan Welch, a South Boulevard fifth grader, made a short presentation in French before the gift-giving ceremony. Other students who presented gifts included: Donald Dunbar, Chase Stuckey, Jada Laird and Mira Bhayroo. In addition, Christine Merchant, a fourth-grade teacher at South Boulevard Elementary, opened the ceremony by singing the French National Anthem, La Marseillaise. Also in attendance was Pauline Ewing, the lead magnet teacher.

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FRENCH ACCORDS/2

This signing of the France-Louisiana Cooperation Accords marks the 40th anniversary celebration of CODOFIL. The renewal of the France-Louisiana Cooperation Accords will be valid until 2012.

Culture, Recreation and Tourism Secretary Pam Breaux, State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek, Louisiana State University Chancellor Michael Martin, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) member Penny Dastugue and Council on the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) President Warren Perrin joined Darcos and Vimont in signing this agreement to preserve and advance the French culture in Louisiana. There are three components to the accord: elementary and secondary education, higher education and audio/visual. Through the education component, France will continue to provide native French-speaking teachers for foreign language classes and immersion programs throughout the state.

The higher education component, also signed that day, will examine cooperative research and exchanges between universities. And the audiovisual component will strengthen Louisiana Public Broadcasting's relationship with the Consulate General of France in New Orleans to co-creation productions with educational and cultural purposes. Additional opportunities provided by the agreement include scholarships and student exchanges for work and study abroad in French-speaking countries.

South Boulevard Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet School is the only East Baton Rouge Parish public school offering foreign language immersion. Native-speaking teachers from all over the world provide instruction in the core academic areas of Math, Science and Social Studies using French or Spanish as the language of instruction. The students also learn about the language's country of origin and its culture. Students will be bilingual by the end of the fifth grade and have the ability to read, write and speak French or Spanish. **For more information, call (225) 343-6630.**

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