

Diocesan Catholic School Board (DCSB)
Cathedral Square Center - Room D/E
Minutes
Tuesday, October 15, 2019

I. **Prayer** offered by Leah Wareck.

II. **Roll Call**

Present: Jill Annable, Andrew Blum, Dave Faber, Rosa Fraga, Sue Haas-Williams, Sterling Morse, Sr. Rosita Schiller, Dave Sipka, John Vande Guchte, Leah Wareck

Absent: Rev. Tom Cavera, Phil May, Rev. Godfrey Onyekwere

Others Present: Shelley Hofmann, Luzia Tartari

III. **Communications:** The Office of Catholic Schools received the “Champion of Inclusive Community” award from All Belong. The award and photos of the evening ceremony were shared.

IV. **Approval of September Minutes:** approved as written

V. **Committee Reports**

A. **Admissions Committee:** report was included in Luzia’s presentation.

Luzia reviewed some enrollment numbers for 2019-20 along with some factors that played a role in this year’s enrollment decline. The elimination of Welcome Scholarships may have contributed significantly to the decline. After a quick review of high school families who received a Welcome Scholarship, the majority of these families did not qualify for or receive Bishop’s Scholarship.

Overall, spending on Bishop’s Scholarships was down slightly; however, Welcome Scholarship Completion Awards came in slightly higher than anticipated. We awarded three vocations scholarships. We have some additional money to help families throughout the year.

Admissions Advocates have asked for baptism lists from 52 parishes. Last year, we received 35 responses. A suggestion was offered to share with Bishop Walkowiak the list of parishes who did not respond to the request. The Office of Catholic Schools is hopeful that with continued communication of the Admissions Advocates’ efforts, more parishes will see the value in sharing their baptism lists and allowing

the Admissions Advocates to reach out to these families in order to encourage enrollment in Catholic schools.

- B. **Finance Committee:** no report.
- C. **Strategic Planning Committee:** no report.
- D. **Executive Committee:** no report.
- D. **Mission Effectiveness Committee:** report included in packet was reviewed. Sr. Rosita plans to send the Mission Effectiveness summary report of the annual survey data to Mission Effectiveness chairs of all the school boards to use in the planning of their school's mission effectiveness initiatives.

The Mission Effectiveness Committee is considering topics for the DCSB retreat. Two topics for consideration include: Theology of the Body and the Diocese of Wichita stewardship model.

- Theology of the Body – Obviously an important teaching overall, but maybe especially so since it is a heavy focus of our schools this year.
- Diocese of Wichita – Review of the history of their stewardship model, how it has grown over the past 60 years to allow for flourishing schools (70% attendance of Diocesan students vs 15% national average), and how we can apply their lessons to our schools.

Should we consider a longer time frame with a light dinner for the retreat so both topics can be covered? Should we extend a second meeting in order to cover both topics at separate times? Board members asked for some time to review both topics and should give their vote to John by the end of this week.

For the issue of bullying identified on the 2018-19 Catholic identity surveys, Dave and Jill would like to survey the principals about bullying in their schools and what efforts have been implemented to address bullying. What could schools share with one another, and/or how could the Office of Catholic Schools help address the issue?

- F. **Marketing Committee:** no report.
 - G. **Development Committee:** no report
- VI. **Superintendent/Asst. Superintendent Reports:** no questions about the report.

A suggestion was offered to have priests make an announcement at Mass about the Screenagers movie and panel discussion.

VII. Discussion Topics

A. Summit Agenda/Session Content

Renee Vaughan-Dwyer is helping to coordinate the agenda and session content for the November Summit again. Board members were asked to update their session descriptions and provide a tagline to encourage people to attend their session.

B. Superintendent/OCS Assessment Survey

The Office of Catholic Schools has been doing a lot of reflecting on the feedback. The assessment was impacted greatly by the proximity of unpopular decisions related to extending the school year due to snow days and the OK Conference vote. It was noted that apart from these two issues, the assessment results would look quite different. Overall, we are addressing a lot of the issues, although we can always do better. Our strategic plan calls for building an alliance of Catholic schools and a network of shared services. Working collaboratively on these goals can be challenging as we move away from a more parochial mindset, but we are making progress.

VIII. Action Items

a. Plan for Talent Recruitment/Catholic College Visits

i. Current Relationships/Relationship Building Activities

One area of opportunity and need is recruiting diverse talent to serve in our schools. The Office of Catholic Schools will make intentional efforts to reach out to Midwest Colleges of Ed through existing relationships. Dave asked for input on whether actual visits are necessary if we make intentional connections at national education conferences and make our interest in their graduates known. The board felt it may not be enough to meet only with the leaders of the colleges. Several questions about recruiting teachers were raised and need to be considered.

- Can the Office of Catholic Schools sponsor a lunch or event on campus and meet with leaders and students?
- Should we send individuals to meet with college faculty and students?
- Can we pilot this type of effort with a few schools? It was recognized that candidates resulting from any of our efforts should be shared with all schools.
- How do we entice them to come to Grand Rapids and West Michigan?
- Should we host students here and give them a tour of Grand Rapids and our schools?
- How can we better utilize our alumni records to seek former students to teach in our schools?

- Should we consider a presentation to high school students about teaching in our schools?
- Should we look at resumes collected at previous job fairs and contact candidates for possible interest in our schools?
- How can we leverage the relationships Luzia started after attending a private college fair on the east coast to recruit students of color to Grand Rapids?

ii. Frontline Education Electronic Recruitment Tool

Frontline Education is an online recruitment tool. Searching the database can be tedious, but It is helpful to be able to enter criteria for searching candidates. However, it is expensive and would need to be paid by the diocese. Should we consider moving some marketing dollars to this tool? Could we pilot this for a year? How much time do we spend dealing with teacher issues, ineffective hires? If we have a stronger candidate pool, will it lessen the time in dealing with issues?

iii. Visits

iv. Budget

The board asked Dave and Jill to put together a recommended plan and present it to the board for discussion at the December meeting.

b. Messaging Recommendations for Pastors

How can we help pastors say more about the value of Catholic education at Mass? How can we identify best practices among priests to share these practices with their fellow priests? For example, how to weave in conversation about Catholic schools into homilies, how to avoid offending people, etc.

A suggestion about organizing a gathering of school pastors to share best practices was resurrected. Ultimately, the pastor has to have a mindset of integrating the mission and ministry of the Catholic school into the parish. How can we facilitate these meetings? Dave and John will contact Fr. Peter Damian and Fr. Mark Peacock about hosting fellow priests in their homes to begin conversations of best practices.

Can this integration mindset begin in the seminary?

IX. New Business: DCSB Building and Grounds Committee – should we have representation on our DCSB for Building and Grounds and who would best serve in this role? The board will discuss further at the December meeting.

X. Closing Prayer: Prayer for Bridging Faith and Future was prayed by all.

XI. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.

**The Fall Summit is Monday, November 4, 2019.
The next DCSB meeting is Tuesday, December 3, 2019.**