

Diocesan Catholic School Board (DCSB)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 15, 2021

I. **Prayer** offered by Dave.

II. **Roll Call**

Present: Andrew Blum, Damon Bouwkamp, Cheryl Butkus, Dave Faber, Sue Haas-Williams, Rev. Godfrey Onyekwere, Sr. Rosita Schiller, Patty Schrand, Tim Thimmesch, Leah Wareck

Absent: Sarah Grey, Rev. Darrel Kempf, Kristina Martinez-Precious, Sterling Morse

Others Present: Shelley Hofmann; Fr. Jegar Fickel, Canonical Administrator, St. Mary/St. Paul Big Rapids; Paula Veneklase, Executive Director, HELP Pregnancy Crisis Aid

III. **Parent communications about masks and vaccine requirements for fall**

Sue opened the session with a welcome to guests and a review of the process for the five parents addressing the board. Sue explained to guests that our Diocesan Catholic School Board is advisory in nature and has no jurisdiction over the topics being presented. She reiterated that the board was happy to listen to parents' concerns, but there would be no response from the board related to the issues being addressed.

Dave Faber thanked the parents for coming to the meeting and sharing their concerns. Dave shared his empathy for students who really struggled with anxiety especially during the time of pandemic. He emphasized to the parents that their children's well being is extremely important to us, and the growth of their faith is at the heart of everything we are doing. However, we will continue to follow public health orders from the state and local government, as we are bound by law to do so. Dave also shared that our bishops have determined that these public health orders are not immoral.

IV. **Spiritual Enrichment - Theology of the Body (TOB)**

Sister Rosita introduced the guest presenters: Fr. Jegar Fickel who is the newly appointed canonical administrator of St. Mary-St. Paul Parish, and Paula Veneklase, the executive director of the HELP Crisis Pregnancy Center.

Father presented his insight into TOB.

- One of the boldest reconfigurations through which to understand the body.
- Not a teaching, but rather a lens through which we better understand the teachings
- An invitation to see things differently
- The Catholic faith repackaged
- Plays upon the affections and movement of the heart

For Paula, TOB started as a way to talk to women who come to the HELP Crisis Pregnancy Center about their bodies and sexuality. Paula began looking for resources to educate women on their sexuality besides “Just Say No” and found TOB to be appropriate for her clients. As a Church, we need to educate parents and teachers how to live out TOB in order to have them authentically share TOB with our children.

Dave shared the TOB journey to date in our schools. It stemmed initially from Bishop Walkowiak’s desire to “hire for mission.” Two years ago, Dave presented Bishop Walkowiak with a plan to use professional development to teach TOB, but Bishop requested weekly TOB discussions among faculties led by school leaders. The Office of Catholic Schools created weekly lesson plans based on curriculum standards (first year - 9th grade standards; second year - 10th grade standards) and Flipgrid videos for accountability. The intentional focus was on transforming the faith life of teachers. Next year, the focus will be on 11th grade standards followed by 12th grade standards.

Dave agreed that the next step needs to be focused on educating parents in TOB.

Students in today’s culture are confronted with so many things that go against TOB. Yet, if we can truly get into the hearts of students, we can silence a lot of the noise and combat a lot of “isms” in today’s society.

V. GRACEAC Athletics Update

A board member shared appreciation for Conrad and his efforts during the pandemic. No questions were asked about the written report.

Vi. Approval of May Minutes: approved as written.

VI. Committee Reports: Questions from written report

A. Admissions - no questions

B. Mission Effectiveness (ME) - The “Profile of a Catholic School Parent” will be shared as soon as the ME committee has voted on it.

C. Development - Andrew and Dave met with Greg Deja to discuss development efforts for schools. They will meet again in the fall to further discuss Greg’s vision once the *Our Shepherds, Our Future* campaign nears completion.

VIII. Superintendents’ Report - Dave addressed questions from the written report.

● **St. Stephen School**

We are excited about the new principal, her passion, and her vision for education.

● **COVID vaccinations**

Dave shared that if the state requires the COVID vaccination, parents can opt out, as with other vaccination requirements, by going through the public health department.

How can we assure parents we are hearing their concerns? We need to communicate that we want all students back and that instruction will be in person.

IX. Discussion topics

A. Update on schools and COVID

We had a total of 310 cases with almost an 80/20 split among students and teachers.

B. Work plan update from committee chairs

Sue thanked the board committee chairs for their efforts in creating work plans. Sue will put together a summary report of what the board has accomplished this year.

X. Action Items

A. Officer elections, Chair and Vice Chair, for 2021-22

Before discussion of officer elections, Cheryl shared that Father Godfrey has agreed to serve a second term.

Sue was nominated to continue as board chair, and Andrew was nominated to continue as vice chair. There were no other nominations. The board approved Sue as chair and Andrew as vice chair.

B. MHSAA Membership Resolution 2021-22

The board approved our MHSAA membership resolution for 2021-22.

XI. Closing Prayer: Prayer for *Bridging Faith & Future* was prayed by all.

XII. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

The next DCSB meeting is Tuesday, September 14 at 6:30 p.m. at Cathedral Square.

2021-22 Meeting Schedule

September 14, 2021

October 19, 2021

November 3, 2021 (Fall Summit)

November 30, 2021

January 18, 2022

February 22, 2022

March 29, 2022

May 3, 2022 (Spring Summit)

May 10, 2022

June 14, 2022

MISSION

We prepare students to seek and fulfill God's plan for learning and life.

VISION

Be a collaborative and strategically focused body delivering leadership, mentorship and expert recommendations that enhance the quality and growth of our Diocesan schools.