

Diocesan Catholic School Board (DCSB)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 18, 2022

I. **Prayer** offered by Kristina.

II. **Roll Call**

Present: Andrew Blum (virtual) , Cheryl Butkus (virtual), Dave Faber, Sarah Grey, Sue Haas-Williams (virtual), Kristina Martinez-Precious (virtual), Sr. Colleen Ann Nagle (virtual), Patty Schrand, Tim Thimmesch, Leah Wareck (virtual)

Absent: Damon Bouwkamp, Rev. Darrel Kempf, Rev. Godfrey Onyekwere

Others Present: Shelley Hofmann, Luzia Tartari (virtual)

III. **Admissions and Enrollment Update**

Luzia Tartari addressed questions about her written report.

- **Based on inquiries, when were the six students enrolled?** Those students were enrolled in 2021-22.
- **How did you compare on the admissions and enrollment funnel this year to last year?** We had more inquiries this year. Inquiries are seasonal, with the most inquiries in June/July and December/January. Enrollment of prospects has been about the same year over year, although tracking has to be done manually and is very time consuming. The new School Admin Customer Relationship Management System will make tracking inquiries much more efficient.
- **Exit surveys** - In terms of reasons for leaving our schools, families can include more than one reason for leaving.

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

V. **Committee Reports: Questions from written report**

A. Building and Grounds - The committee met this evening and discussed some great ideas. The initial priority will be identifying grant opportunities for safety and security initiatives. In May, the committee will present a facilities master planning session.

B. Mission Effectiveness (ME) - Sr. Colleen Ann recently sent an email to the ME cohort to determine who was still involved, what are schools' priorities, etc. Sr. Colleen Ann received a lot of good feedback, which the ME committee will review and determine how the committee can be most helpful to our schools.

C. Strategic Planning - Dave shared that West Catholic High School has determined they will postpone their planning process for one more year due to a number of reasons. St. Mary's, Spring Lake has not yet reached out to Sue about beginning the planning process. IHM asked Sue if she could meet with them in March. SJV asked Sue if she could take another look at their final plan.

VI. Superintendents' Report - There were no questions from the written report.

Appreciation was shared for the OCS's efforts to recruit teachers from colleges and universities within the State of Michigan and the midwest. Sarah G. and Sarah T. are working on updating materials to highlight our schools, the City of Grand Rapids, and employment opportunities within the diocese.

Collaboration with Aquinas College and other recruitment activities - Dave met with Dr. Susan English, Chair of the Education Department at Aquinas College. Susan is interested in exploring ways to expand their Accelerated Masters in Education (AME) program. Sarah G. and Terry Tyrrell, President of Catholic Central High School, have experience in education programs that include service to the church, communal living, formation for teaching in a Catholic school, etc. Dave, Sarah G. and Terry are brainstorming a program for the diocese in conjunction with Aquinas College. Aquinas College is open to discussing the addition of a service component and community living experience to their AME program. The next step in the process is a focus group with teachers and administrators within the diocese who have gone through a similar program to learn more about their experiences. Kristina shared her positive impressions of the Aquinas College education students with whom she has worked.

VII. Discussion topics

A. Update on schools and COVID

Dave shared data on cases within our schools. The vast majority of cases are still in Kent and Ottawa counties. Eighty percent of cases are among students. The percentage of transmission within schools is still only about six percent of all the cases. The CDC has updated its guidance for schools. The MDHHS has updated its guidance, as have local health departments. The OCS has updated guidance for schools on our website. Under the new guidance, there are fewer reporting requirements for school leaders.

- **Has there been any parent pushback?** Yes, there has been some pushback mainly from families who are hesitant to have students return under the present protocol and/or from healthcare workers who are pleading for help. As opposed to 2020-21, there is a little more understanding because many people know people who have had COVID.
- **Has there been any discussion about encouraging schools to offer virtual options during this surge?** At the January principals' meeting, school leaders were asked to be ready to offer virtual options if needed. Our goal is to keep as many classrooms open as possible, in person, but be ready if a virtual/remote option is necessary.

B. Bridging Faith & Future (BFF) Refresh

1. **Next steps**
2. **Feedback from Meeting with Principals on Jan 4 -**
3. **Present Draft Tactics in Spring**

At the January principals' meeting, school leaders were asked two questions. First, are the revised strategies the right ones, and do you see this plan as helpful to your

own school's plan? If not, how would you change it? Second, are there strategies that can be combined and/or eliminated? A lot of positive feedback was shared.

Dave will continue to take the refreshed strategies and vision metrics to pastors and boards for feedback. Sue, Dave and the strategic planning committee will work on final revisions on the strategies and vision metrics in March and April. Then, tactics will be updated.

C. Committee work

Board members were asked to review their committees' work plans in context of the refreshed draft of the BFF plan. The goal is to identify additional activities for the committees to work on this spring and next fall. The board will review the work plans during the February meeting.

D. Feasibility Study for new school in northwest deanery

Dave has reached out to both pastors, and both have agreed to meet with Dave and Sue. We are scheduled to meet with them in February.

E. Let MI Kids Learn Petition Drive

Dave gave an overview of the Let MI Kids Learn program and the family qualifications. The legislation that was passed in MI to create scholarship opportunities and to grant tax credits was vetoed, so now there is a petition to collect enough signatures to override the veto. The Diocese of Grand Rapids will participate in the signature drive. Cheryl has generously volunteered to help Dave with this petition drive.

VIII. Action Items - Review committee work plans.

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

X. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.

The next DCSB meeting is on Tuesday, February 22 (Prayer: Damon) 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.