

St. Joseph Catholic School committee minutes.

October 17, 2024

Attendance: Jeremy Blackwood, Jay Boucher, Kimberley Bayer, Janel Holmes, Fr. Justin Lopina, Chris Multhauf, Sara Quates, Joanna Schmanski, Bryanna Van Vreede, Stephanie Weiler, Barton Wolf, Rachel Blackwood (Home and School)

Meeting began at 6:35pm.

President's remarks. *Blackwood.* Request to keep the meeting focused on the agenda items to facilitate order and good use of time.

Principal's report. *Multhauf.*

- The principal is focused on meeting the needs of individual students based on MAPS testing and communicating positive information about St. Joe's. To this end he is working on creating a document that distinguishes St. Joe's from other schools in the area.
- The staff have been working to vertically align the curriculum across grades by submitting detailed outlines of what material is covered each year.

Teachers' report. *Van Vreede.*

- Teachers are focused on keeping the children motivated and attentive.
- Splitting 7th graders into two groups based on ability has been successful this year.
- There have been many field trips in the last several weeks; the 7th and 8th grade buddies chaperoning 4K and 5K to the pumpkin farm was especially impressive.
- The Soles for Catholic Schools week is going well; there is a cereal drive going on right now as well.

PR/Marketing subcommittee report. *Sara Quates.*

- Chris Schulteis from the Archdiocese met with Fr. Justin, the members of the subcommittee, some members of the pastoral council, and leadership from the school. The meeting was helpful in that it suggested the PR/Marketing we have been gravitating towards, particularly a targeted mailing and increased Facebook presence, are likely to be effective.
- The PR/Marketing committee is recommending that we pursue a grant for professional marketing assistance. Van Vreede and Multauf will help write a grant; will ask the parish trustee to lend assistance as he helped with a buildings and grounds grant in the recent past.
- PR/Marketing also recommends that the web site be modified to include a school tour scheduling tool and to make the tuition schedule easier to find. Confirm that a second update of the school website is in process

Pastor's report. *Fr. Justin.*

- This month the pastor's report focused on PR and marketing, as he is very focused on setting goals and putting together a marketing plan. The plan will be in place at Christmas and fully in effect by January or February. Marketing will target families enrolling in school for the first time and families looking to switch from public schools. We will not seek to recruit families from other Catholic schools.
 - **Elements of the plan that are in place:** word of mouth from school families is positive, the yard signs are well-distributed and the website redesign is underway, families are active in several St. Joe's Facebook groups for communication and sharing news about the school.
 - **Near-term goals:** Obtain and circulate testimonials from graduates, ask families to leave positive reviews of the school on Google, advertise at Mayfair Mall because of the proximity to the school and because it seems

affordable, and a YouTube limited series about the school.

- **More complex goals:** Arrange for targeted media advertising, and a mailing. Van Vreede notes there is a deal on postcards available through the Archdiocese right now)
- The focus of all marketing materials will be character and faith-based education. Academics is important but the real value of the school is Catholic identity.

Technology subcommittee report. *Van Vreede.*

- The subcommittee is still working on setting up a meeting with the school staff's technology committee and the school technology company, ETA.

Home and School report. *Rachel Blackwood.*

- Trunk or Treat was postponed due to lightning but we are expecting good attendance at the rescheduled date (October 19).
- Cookie House preparation has begun. It is logistically challenging to share kitchen space and work efficiently. Yard signs have been made.
- There are a number of families who have not paid their \$50 home and school dues. Home and School prefers not to pester families for it, but it is a significant sum and they have had to make some cuts. Ms. Greco (the music teacher) has asked for funding to take the students to the symphony but Home and School is unable to fund this.
- The weekly newsletter is thorough but it is easy to miss things because of the length. Discuss asking the room moms to pass along communication about cookie house and the need for volunteers.

Pastoral Council report.

- The pastoral council this month focused on the PR/Marketing goals and restructuring leadership in the annual rummage sale.
- Similar to cookie house, a goal for this year's rummage sale is to make it easier for volunteers to sign up for specific tasks.

Old business.

Parent surveys. *Multhauf.*

Sara Quates met with Multhauf and Van Vreede and settled on "Panorama" as a survey tool. Much of it is available for our use for free with attribution; there are options to add on deep analytics and additional questions for a fee.

Ideally this would be administered with a survey platform called "Qualtrix." Van Vreede is going to see if the archdiocese has institutional access. It is smartphone friendly.

There will be two waves of surveys in the early spring, one focused on younger students' parents and one focused on middle schoolers. Some families will be asked to take the survey twice, but the focus will be different and we agree the families will understand the value of this.

The school will offer an incentive to participate such as entry in a drawing to waive the annual enrollment fee.

New business. *Jeremy Blackwood.*

Mission statement review. *Blackwood.*

Read and reflect on mission statement. Discuss some redundancies and punctuation, but no one has any substantive criticism. We agree to review the mission statement every few meetings.

St. Joseph's Day. *Fr. Justin.*

The parish is again planning a St. Joseph's Day celebration for the evening of March 19 and will invite the bishops to an

evening Mass and dinner. The students will still have a morning Mass. The committee is being asked to come up with something to contribute to the event; we will discuss in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Kimberley Bayer.