

## Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan School Advisory Council Meeting

March 15, 2016

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

**In Attendance:** Diane Starkovich, Rebecca Hammel , Tom Burns, Brian David, Joe Villarreal, Jeff Thomas, Brian Dooling, Augusto Elias, Jeff Gregor, Maureen Schumacher, Diedra St. Julien.  
**Absent:** Monsignor John Walsh, Brad Wilson, Lou Delfino, and Betsy San Miguel.

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

Dr. Tom Burns welcomed council members to the meeting at 7:37 a.m. and Diane led everyone in an opening prayer. Dr. Burns asked those present to keep Fr. Joseph Peek and his family in prayer. Fr. Peek, who served at All Saints Parish, passed away on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> after a long illness.

- **Approval of Agenda**

Dr. Burns asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was given and seconded.

- **Approval of January, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Burns asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was given and seconded.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Diane started off by saying that it has been very busy with the hiring of a President for St. Pius X Catholic High School and 3 new principals. Chad Barwick, the first St. Pius X President, has been officially announced as well as the new principal at Immaculate Heart of Mary, Kellie DesOrmeaux, who is currently serving as Assistant Principal at St. Thomas More. Announcements for selected principals at Blessed Trinity and St. Mary's in Rome are pending successful background checks. Diane said the Georgia Bulletin will be featuring an article on the president/principal model that has been adopted by St. Pius X. The Georgia Bulletin has interviewed Diane and the new president, Chad Barwick for this upcoming article. Questions were posed as to the procedure of hiring presidents/principals. Diane explained the process and a discussion followed.

Diane said that she and Brad Wilson have been approving school budgets for 2016-2017. Only two schools' budgets approvals remain and have been scheduled for the week of March 21. Average tuition increases in all schools are 3% or less.

- **Committee Reports**

New Schools – Diedre St. Julien thanked Diane for delivering her report at the January meeting. She said since then there have been very little changes to report. The St. George School in Newnan has changed its name to Ave Maria School. Holdheide School in Woodstock had a drop in enrollment and went from a PreK-3 to now only a PreSchool, which would not be recognized in this process. Both schools have been given the 12-step process in order to become recognized as a Catholic school.

Executive - Tom Burns mentioned that Alvin Igwebuike of Ohio Diocesan Catholic Schools Advisory Commission reached out to him and Rebecca requesting our Viability Index Policy. The material has been sent to Alvin as requested and Tom was pleased stating that this was a good reflection on all the hard work our committee had done.

Finance – Brian David said, as mentioned in Diane’s written report, that most of the school budgets have been approved for the 2016-17 school year. The average tuition increase is 3% or less in all schools and those announcements should be going out to families soon if not already.

Regarding GRACE Scholars, Brian David said the window has just closed for those that were approved in January to send in their contributions. The final numbers will be reported at the next meeting. Diane said that David Brown received some unexpected stock donations as well as matching gifts from companies. She also said that some of the approved donors may have missed the deadline.

Marketing – Augusto Elias said that the marketing team had a very successful meeting regarding the survey and feels that they are about 10 working days away from offering a proposal for input and approval.

The enrollment pilot plan is ready to begin and will be targeting St. John Neumann and Our Lady of Victory. Augusto thanked Diane for reaching out to the principals and clearing the path for Joe Villareal and Marcos Arias to start working with them at their convenience.

Augusto said that Maureen Schumacher is reviewing and revamping the social media toolkit elements and should have a revised toolkit to present for input and approval by the end of this month. This would be for dissemination in August 2016.

Diane inquired about the timing of the survey and suggested that maybe the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in August, after families are settled back into the school year, would be a good time. Her other question was how long would it take once the survey is launched to receive the data. A discussion followed as to which vehicle (i.e. email databank, website, church bulletin) would be used to distribute the survey.

In order to move forward with this project and define specific timelines, Augusto said he is in need of the following:

1. Zip codes of the geographic target areas including the outlying areas.

2. Any questions that need to be included in the survey, i.e. special needs etc.
3. The answer as to whether the pastors can be approached to share their database of parishioners for email/mail distribution.

Nominating – Brian Dooling said 4 people have expiring terms and Lou Delfino has resigned his position due to extensive travel which makes a total of 5 openings for the 2016-2017 school year. He said he has received 5 or 6 viable candidates thus far and will be reaching out to them to schedule interviews. He said he will try to recommend not only those candidates willing to serve, but will strive to get good representation from various parishes/schools & geographic regions. Dr. Burns offered to help with the interview process and encouraged members to send in more nominations. Brian asked for 100% participation in the upcoming ASAC Annual Self-Evaluation Survey which will take place in May. He asked that they be returned to him in a timely manner so the results can be tabulated and given at the June ASAC meeting.

Policy – Jeff Gregor said on February 2, 2016 there was a very productive policy committee meeting to discuss a unified substance abuse policy for all three Archdiocesan high schools. Steve Spellman invited the principal of SPEC (Strategic Prevention Education Compliance Group) to join the meeting. SPEC specializes in developing effective drug-free environments in businesses and private schools in the United States. They presently serve private schools in our area such as, Woodward Academy, Wesleyan, Darlington, Westminster and Benedictine Military School in Savannah and are recognized nationally as experts in this field.

Hila, the principal at SPEC, presented a working knowledge and deeper understanding of a drug free campus and the merits of random drug testing, the differences between urine samples (Gold Standard) versus hair testing (Challenges), and various case studies. She also presented the full service capabilities of the SPEC program which includes written policy statements, random drug testing, education, training, consultation and technical support.

Jeff said the benefits from random drug testing to ensure a drug free campus were well documented by SPEC. The benefits include: increase in parent satisfaction, safer school environment, student's strength to say no, education quality, and school attendance. They also mentioned that instituting a program which includes random drug testing for students, faculty and administration builds community support.

The information shared and discussed at this meeting stimulated additional consideration for random drug testing therefore requiring more deliberation and discussion. Communication remains critical to any shift in policy. A unified policy must include engaging parents and continually emphasizing that primary education of substance abuse begins at home.

Diane said she has relayed the information to Archbishop Gregory and he is in support of implementing this program in the high schools as long as the applicants/families are fully advised of what they are agreeing to before they apply. Since the application process has already taken place for 2016-17, the full implementation of this program would begin with the 2017-2018 school year. Questions were asked and a lengthy discussion followed.

- **Visits to the Local Advisory Council Meetings**

No visits to report at this time.

- **Future Business**

Election of Officers at June Meeting – Diane said we have 2 officer positions to fill, (chair and vice-chair) and asked to send nominations to Brian Dooling before the June meeting.

Advisory Council Self-Assessment – Tom Burns asked everyone to turn the self-assessments around as soon as possible so that Brian Dooling has enough time to evaluate results and report at the June meeting.

- **Adjournment and Next Meeting Date**

Next meeting will be at the Chancery, Thursday, June 16, 2016 at 7:30a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler  
Catholic Schools Program Specialist