

Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting

August 22, 2017

In Attendance: Diane Starkovich, Augusto Elias, Marcos Arias, Jeff Thomas, Mark Uebelacker, Brad Wilson, Brian Weick, Betsy San Miguel, Robert Heilmann, Connie Urbanski, Craig Wade (by phone), Paula Brosnan (by phone). **Absent:** Diedra St. Julien, Fr. James Duffy, Maureen Schumacher

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

Augusto welcomed everyone and Diane led the council in a prayer for peace. This same prayer will be recited in all of our schools at 10am on Friday, September 8th in honor of the Feast of St. Peter Claver, which is Saturday, September 9th. Diane said we will also begin all of our fall meetings with this prayer for peace and unity in the United States and throughout the world.

- **Approval of Agenda**

Augusto asked for an approval of the agenda. The agenda was then approved and seconded.

- **Approval of the June Meeting Minutes**

Augusto asked for an approval of the June 2017 meeting minutes. The approval was given and seconded.

- **Council Goals and Expectations for 2017-2018 – Marcos Arias**

Marcos Arias went over the Goals and Expectations for this school year. These are similar goals and expectations from years past with the exception of #6 which has been recently added. Marcos said these goals are specific and very relevant for today and invited the council's input. They are as follows:

1. We will work to build trust among all Principal's Advisory Councils and the ASAC by increasing communication, attending school council meetings, demonstrating leadership, and providing support and advice to the Archbishop and Superintendent.
2. We will work toward meeting our goals for the strategic plan in accordance with the AdvancED certification and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). This will include the development and implementation of our strategic plan and to update our policy manual.
3. We will maximize enrollment in all our schools in the Archdiocese.
4. We will continue to develop and execute our financial plan for the financing of the individual schools in our Archdiocese. This will include a plan to be both transparent and accessible in support of these goals.
5. We will help the ASAC to facilitate the goal of providing catholic education to all those who wish to receive a catholic education.
6. We will maximize our effectiveness in ASAC by our continued diligence & preparation for decisions, attendance & participation in meetings, and more clear structure on deliverables in our committees.

- **Council Assignments – Augusto Elias**

Augusto said based on our current goals and the amount of work that needs to be done, the marketing committee needs extra help. He said Marcos will remain the chair of the marketing committee and will be assisted by Brian Weick, Mark Uebelacker, Maureen Schumacher, and Craig Wade. Paula Brosnan has accepted the Nominating committee assignment and will be assisted by Diedra St. Julien. Diane added that Robert Heilmann and Jeff Thomas will be working with the Ad Hoc/ Strategic Planning Committee and Betsy San Miguel will remain on the finance committee. These assignments will allow the council to be more efficient and truer to the mission moving ahead.

- **Discussion of Council Self-Evaluation – June, 2017**

Augusto said this past year was unique in that nearly all the council members were new which results in less organizational memory and puts us in the position of almost starting over. Augusto also said if we take a broad view of the evaluation results, statistically it is flat. When it comes to areas of opportunity Augusto said we went down in several areas and asked the council members for suggestions on how we can improve. Diane mentioned that we need to stay focused on the goals and that measuring these goals with a yearly evaluation is very important and holds everyone accountable.

Mark Uebelacker said that while he agrees that collecting the data is very important, he added that for some new members who may have only been to two or three meetings were confused by some of the survey questions. He added that the prior council was made up of a core group of individuals who worked together for a while on specific projects and the survey questions made complete sense to them. Mark said the results were a little lower this year but taking into consideration the number of new council members, the results may not be relevant. Diane agreed and recommended that in moving forward it would a good idea to preview the self-evaluation questions to make sure all understand. In addition to this, Diane said we need to work on doing a better job of reminding everyone of the goals.

Augusto said that having been on this council for a little while, he feels the area where we can truly add value is marketing with all hands on deck. Marcos added that some may think they cannot contribute to marketing if that is not their specialty but said as parents we can all add much value from being consumers of this very product and can contribute from that prospective. Diane said that all of our key stakeholders (students, teachers, parents etc.) will be asked to participate in a survey from AdvancED . This survey will be much like a customer satisfaction survey and will offer crucial information for setting our goals for Accreditation. Diane added that teachers don't usually consider themselves to be marketers but that every person at the school is a marketer for their school by the way they welcome and treat students, parents and prospective families. A different mindset needs to be adopted. Diane said our principals will be challenged to focus their efforts on marketing and use our marketing toolkit.

- **Saturday, September 30, 2017 - All Advisory Council In-Service – 9am-Noon (Optional Mass-8am)**

Diane advised that all new members who have gone through the Schools' Advisory Council Training have been advised to attend the in-service. Diane said that Marcos will present the results of our research study at the in-service. Each ASAC member will be asked to sit at the school's table where they are scheduled to visit. There will be a short evaluation given to all attendees at the end of the in-service.

A discussion followed regarding challenges we are facing regarding clergy supporting Catholic Schools and parents' priorities when it comes to sending their children to Catholic Schools.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Diane started out by saying that we have had some great media coverage recently. The local Fox News Channel covered some of our schools enjoying the Solar Eclipse Day outside with their glasses and interviewed a student from St. Thomas More. Also, Christian Coleman, a 2014 graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School, who recently turned pro in the World Games and was a silver medalist in the 2016 Summer Olympics in track and field, was interviewed during his recent visit to Our Lady of Mercy. While visiting, he gave a pep-talk to students about setting goals, staying the course and how working hard can accomplish your goals. NBC (11 Alive) and Fox (Channel 5) televised this and a clip of the interview should appear on our website in the near future.

Diane mentioned the Ave Maria Hybrid School, which is located in Newnan and has been given the steps to become recognized as a Catholic School, has indicated its desire to seek Dominican Sisters to staff the school. Diane Explained that Mother Anne Marie generally honors requests from the (Arch)Bishop in each diocese when requests are made. The Archdiocese of Atlanta has requested that the Sisters staff another archdiocesan school when the occasion arises; there is a 2-3 year wait for assignments to be confirmed.

Diane opened the floor up for questions or comments from her written report. Augusto asked the status of hiring a marketing firm. Diane said she had been approached by a firm out of New Orleans and more recently she reached out to a company in Wisconsin and asked them to put together a proposal. As of now no proposal has been received. Diane said that presently we are planning to run a full page ad on the back page of the Georgia Bulletin giving impressive facts and statistics on our schools in hopes of targeting our biggest market which is the Catholic PSR families. This will not only help them get to know our schools better, but will also show the benefits of a K-12 Catholic Education and the quality of our teachers. Our challenge in advertising is to show the benefits, making our schools both relevant and desirable. Augusto said he feels the key is to incorporate both facts and statistics along with testimonials from parents, students and graduates of our schools.

Craig Wade said he recently looked up our schools on Wikipedia and saw that very little information was given as opposed to other private schools in the area displaying a lot of impressive information and statistics. He suggested we begin by getting our facts out there on Wikipedia so that the public when shopping for schools has an opportunity to see that our schools are a viable option.

Augusto then asked Marcos to speak briefly on the Marketing plan. Marcos said that along with working on the strategic plan, he is trying to come up with a marketing plan that will interweave with the Strategic Plan. He will have the marketing committee look at the draft and give feedback and add data to support the plan. Once that is done it will be presented to the council.

Diane talked about how we have hired Partners in Mission to help us with our enrollment and marketing efforts. This is a firm out of Boston that works with Catholic Schools across the country on being more proactive in regards to the Admissions process and the approach to Marketing.

- **AdvancED Engagement Review – Interviews on February 20, 2018**

Diane said that we have our accreditation site visit beginning on February 20, 2018. The team will be at the Chancery on that day and Diane asked for as many council members as possible to be present for an interview.

- **Archbishop's 11th Annual Banquet for Catholic Education**

Diane invited council members to the Archbishop's 11th Annual Banquet for Catholic Education which is scheduled for Saturday, January 27, 2018. It will be at the Marietta Hilton Hotel and Conference Center and the night will begin with Mass at 5pm celebrated by Archbishop Gregory, a Cocktail Reception at 6pm and then Dinner and the Awards Ceremony at 7pm. Please let the Office of Catholic Schools know if you would like to attend.

- **Binder Tabs/Council Member Information Update**

Diane brought attention to the binder tabs given out for this year's meetings. She asked that the handouts and reports from each meeting be placed in the binder under the appropriate tab.

- **Sign-Up for Local Council Meeting Visits**

Diane passed around a pink folder for members to sign up for school council visits. She encouraged them to pick a school that they have not visited yet and are not familiar with. Those who were not in attendance will need to contact Diane to sign up. A reminder is always sent to council members at the beginning of the month their meeting is scheduled.

- **Archdiocese of Atlanta Mission Statement Review**

Diane brought the council's attention to the Mission, Vision & Belief Statements which was in their packet and asked them to review these and get back to her with any comments or suggestions. Diane said the mission statement was written by a group of principals several years back and has been reviewed prior to our last accreditation visit. We are presently in the draft stage.

- **Adjournment and Next Meeting Date – November 7, 2017**

Diane stated that the next meeting will be Tuesday, November 7th in Archbishop's Conference Room located on the 3rd floor and Archbishop Gregory will be in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05am.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler, Schools Program Specialist

