

Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting

January 16, 2018

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

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

Marcos Arias called the meeting to order and Diane Starkovich led the council in an opening prayer.

- **Approval of Agenda**

Marcos asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was given and seconded.

- **Approval of the June Meeting Minutes**

Marcos asked for a motion to approve the November 2017 meeting minutes. The motion was given and seconded.

- **Chad Barwick, President, St. Pius X Catholic High School – Report on School's Strategic Plan**

Marcos introduced Chad to the council members. Chad started off by stating that St. Pius X is in its 60th year of operation with a student body of 1085 and staff and faculty of 138. The tenure of the faculty is right under 19 years. He thanked the Office of Catholic Schools for their support as well as the guidance and support from this Archdiocesan Schools Advisory Council. He said that the St. Pius strategic plan will mirror the Archdiocesan strategic plan's format and have very close mission statements. One of the goals in Strategic Planning is to look at Master Planning which should articulate some of the school's facility needs. This strategic plan should run through 2020. (Vision 2020) Chad said in the new plan, which he hopes to start in 2019, he would like to see more targeted goals with timelines and a person assigned to the responsibility of each goal. A St. Pius X Vision 2020 Strategic Plan pamphlet was given out to each council member to look over outlining four strategic priorities. Those four priorities are as follows:

1. Preserve and enhance the strong St. Pius X Culture and Community
2. Adapt the Curriculum to foster Student Success in Life
3. Update and Develop the Facilities necessary to achieve the Mission and Vision
4. Substantially increase annual and endowment giving.

After elaborating on each individual priority, Chad opened it up for questions and comments. Marcos inquired as to what the top two or three challenges in which the new strategic plan needs to address. Chad said the biggest challenge St. Pius faces is the aging facility. He said the academic program could benefit greatly from facility changes which would include creative environments for collaborative group work and teaching from a student center prospective in order to use technology more effectively. Diane asked Chad to explain to the council members how the learning lab works. Chad explained that the learning lab is a student-led space that is non-traditional in its orientation which allows for collaboration and flexibility. St. Pius currently has several classrooms that have been converted into

learning labs. Diane then asked what is available for those students who need additional assistance academically. Chad responded by saying that this is another area strategic planning can help. He said St. Pius serves students with cognitive needs that are manageable for them and said they have a wonderful resource group that works with the student's study skills.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Diane Starkovich reminded everyone about the 11th annual Archbishop's Education Banquet on Saturday, January 27th and asked those planning to attend to RSVP as soon as possible. Diane said our schools and the OCS have been working very hard preparing for the upcoming AdvancED visit which will happen February 19-22. On Tuesday, February 20th the review team will be interviewing key stakeholders and Diane asked for as many council members as possible to be present for the ASAC interview at 1:30 that afternoon. This visit occurs every 5 years and we are the first Catholic system in the country to go under the new protocol for AdvancED Accreditation.

Diane brought the council's attention to the following items:

1. A Wall Street Journal article about private schools having to find new creative ways to attract students because of lower enrollment numbers across the country. Diane said this speaks directly to our marketing efforts and the marketing survey we conducted as well as NCEA's survey.
2. An advertisement flyer which highlights the excellence of our schools. This also recently appeared on the back page of the Georgia Bulletin. Diane said we have printed 10,000 of these flyers and have given them out to all of our schools to be distributed in their school communities, parish bulletins, open houses, local establishments etc. The principals have been asked to target the religious education population at the surrounding parishes.
3. The 2016-2017 annual report is posted online at <https://archatl.com/offices/catholic-schools/>

Diane discussed a situation with the council regarding a junior at one of our high schools who refused to take the random drug test. As a result, the student was dismissed but her parents are asking that the student be allowed to return for senior year. Diane thanked the council for their feedback and said she will discuss this with Archbishop Gregory, notify the parents on the decision made, and report the outcome back to the council.

- **Council Visits - Feedback**

Paula Brosnan visited St. Joseph Catholic Parish School in Athens right before Thanksgiving. She said the team was very engaged and there was much discussion on marketing activity. No finance report was given due to someone resigning from that committee. Fr. McGuinness was present at the meeting and it was well run. Diane said that since Paula's visit Fr. McGuinness has retired and the parochial vicar, Fr. Paul Moreau, has been named Parish Administrator. The interim principal, Theresa Napoli, will become the permanent principal effective July 1, 2018. Paula said that Brian Weick also visited St. Joseph-Athens recently to help with marketing.

Brian reported that the school was preparing a 2-day open house event and that there are many good marketing tactics being utilized in the attempt to increase enrollment. One thing Brian suggested to them in regards to their marketing/advertising materials is to have more consistency with their logos and images so that the community can easily recognize them.

Mark Uebelacker visited St. Peter Claver on November 16th. He said the council followed all the correct protocols at the meeting. Their goal is to have 220 students by 2020. Mark said much of the meeting was taken up discussing old issues regarding the merging of 3 schools into one 16 years ago and how this affects present enrollment. Principal Susanne Greenwood urged them to focus on the present and that it was time to move on. Diane said that even though St. Peter Claver School is a regional school, the pastor of St. Peter and Paul (on the same campus as the school) is very supportive of the school and serves on the council. There are also representatives on the council from the other parishes that were affected by the merger which makes for a good relationship with the surrounding parishes.

Marcos briefly referred to Augusto's visit at St. Thomas More saying that it appeared to have gone well and that all protocols were met.

Marcos visited Queen of Angels on November 13th and said the council expressed awareness of all the support and resources provided to them by the Office of Catholic Schools. There was no clergy present at the meeting. Marcos said they were in the process of transitioning over to android laptops for grades 3-8. The annual appeal was going on at the time and they were expecting 100% participation. Student tour guides, social media, Parent Appreciation Day and opportunities to highlight teacher credentials are all marketing tools they are utilizing. They were about to kick off their strategic plan and by-laws will be incorporated with that plan.

Diane added that there is some pro-bono work being done right now on the 3 northern CENGI schools, Queen of Angels, Blessed Trinity and Holy Redeemer. The CENGI consultant is looking for ways we can combine services to help these schools streamline financial responsibilities. Brad said that shared services make sense for these schools in the areas of facilities, fund-raising and finance.

Diane mentioned that Brian Marks, principal of Blessed Trinity, will be leaving after this year and a principal search will take place to find his replacement. There is also a good chance of adding a president model to Blessed Trinity next year. More information on this will follow in the coming months.

- **Committee Reports**

- Marketing Committee

Marcos spoke about the 3 advertisements that have appeared and will appear in the Georgia Bulletin. He thanked Rebecca for the great work on the content, continuity and for meeting the necessary deadlines for submission. Diane said there has been very positive feedback on the ads.

In regards to working with schools on enrollment advisement, Marcos thanked Brian Weick on his visits to St. Joseph School in Athens and St. Mary's School in Rome. Marcos gave compliments on the marketing flyer and said listing all the schools on the back of the flyer was a smart move as it speaks to our system of schools collectively. Marcos said the marketing committee is a little behind with the Marketing Plan but that the timing works out because of the accreditation visit taking priority.

Strategic Planning Committee

Diane spoke of the 3 productive (but not well attended) town hall meeting given at each high school where she, Jeff Thomas and Bob Heilmann were in attendance. The strategic plan is in draft form and will be presented to Jeff and Bob after Diane goes over a few key items with Archbishop Gregory. Diane said it will be posted for the accreditation review team 2 weeks before their visit. She said one of the themes addressed in the strategic plan is to open our schools to more developmentally challenged students with lower cognitive abilities. Diane said from the stakeholder surveys it is apparent that school staff and parents want more financial transparency. They want the school's budget explained and to have more communication regarding facilities. Discussion followed.

Finance Committee

Brad Wilson reported that block grants are done. Salary Scales are also done for next year; elementary schools will receive 3% raise and 2% for high schools.

Council Self-Evaluation – Mark Uebelacker

Mark said he will be sending out the self-evaluation to members shortly after the next meeting and asked for 100% participation. Mark also said he expects this year's evaluation to be a better comparison as it's the same group as last year with more experience on the council. Mark listed the names of the council members whose term expires June 30, 2018. They are: Betsy San Miguel, Maureen Schumacher, Diedre St. Julien, Jeff Thomas and Brian Weick. Diane asked those members to get back to her or Mark as soon as possible with whether or not they want to continue on the council so an accurate number of replacements can be determined. Diane also asked members to recommend possible candidates for the next term, keeping in mind the emphasis on marketing as well as geographical and gender balance.

- **Future Business**

Diane said we need to update our by-laws as they were last reviewed in 2007. She said each school should have a technology committee and a strategic planning committee and therefore should be added to the by-laws. Diane said she would like to have this done by the next meeting and asked for volunteers to help with updating this policy since we currently do not have a policy committee.

- **Adjournment – Time and Place of Next Meeting**

Marcos adjourned the meeting with a RSVP reminder for the Education Banquet and the Accreditation visit. Next meeting is Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at 7:30am at the Chancery.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler, Schools Program Specialist