

Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting January 15, 2019

In Attendance: Diane Starkovich, Marcos Arias, Mark Uebelacker, Craig Wade, Brad Wilson, Brian Dooling, Catherine Kennedy Harris, Stacy Lewis, Maureen McAbee, Beth Clark Morrison, Michelle Raney, Augusto Elias, Paula Brosnan. Bob Heilmann and Fr. Jim Duffy. Visitor and Presenter – Kellie DesOrmeaux, Principal of Immaculate Heart of Mary.

- **Welcome & Opening Prayer**

Marcos Arias called the meeting to order and Diane led the council in a prayer on Respect for Life.

- **Approval of Agenda**

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

- **Approval of August Meeting Minutes**

Marcos asked for a motion to approve the November 2018 meeting minutes. The motion was approved and seconded.

- **Kellie DesOrmeaux, Principal, Immaculate Heart of Mary School – Report on School's Strategic Plan**

Diane introduced Kellie to the council and said she will be presenting to the council IHM's strategic plan. Diane also indicated that Kellie has been selected by her peers to be the 2018-19 Principal of the Year. She will be celebrated at the 12th Annual Archbishop's Banquet for Catholic Education on January 26th at the Marietta Hilton.

Kellie began by saying she is the 14th principal at Immaculate Heart of Mary and is in her third year there. Her previous position was assistant principal at St. Thomas More. First, Kellie explained the new pillars in their school crest, which truly encompasses what is IHM's all about. The white lily represents modeling the faith after Mary, who is the patron saint of the school. The next is the open book which represents scripture, Jesus being the Alpha & the Omega. The open hands represent service and being open to God and willing to do for others not only in our school but in the community and the world. The burning urn represents integrity and what IHM hopes to instill in all their students everyday they are in school.

Kellie said she is a firm believer in data and watches for patterns and trends. Some facts Kellie shared is that IHM is currently at full capacity with 503 students enrolled. IHM presently services 44 zip codes and 19 different Catholic parishes. When a person visits the school the first thing they see is a sign that states "Welcome to our school, welcome to our family". 92% of IHM families participate in the annual fund and over 50% of the staff are invested and have some sort of personal relationship to the school whether it be as an alumni, having sent their children there, parents history, etc.

Kellie said that IHM participates in 26 service projects annually. Some of these include the Ronald McDonald House, Kindness Challenge for Shoes for Kenya, Global Goals coupled with a Virtue of the month in an attempt to make a difference by the year 2030. Also, IHM's 24 garden bed which not only teaches the children how to care for God's creation but also provides parents a chance to volunteer and donate food to local co-ops.

Kellie gave out a brochure which gives an overview of IHM's strategic plan for 2017-2022. Immaculate Heart of Mary is the largest ministry of the parish. Kellie recited IHM's mission statement and elaborated on each area of the strategic plan. Those six areas include:

1. Catholic Identity –at the core of everything at IHM
2. Academic Excellence – technology integration to enhance learning
3. Operational Excellence-professional development
4. Branding/Marketing/Public Relations – parent ambassadors/social media/mailings and community outreach
5. Physical Plant – building 60 years old – many things need to be done - Capital Campaign possible for the future.
6. Finance – Continue striving to be financially stable in order to achieve all of the above. Communication.

Marcos thanked Kellie for an outstanding job outlining IHM's strategic plan. He asked where families would fit into their strategic plan. Kellie said that families certainly are a big part of meeting the financial needs of the school as well as in the area of Operational Excellence. She said it would not be possible for the school to be involved in so many service projects if it were not for the support of their many parent volunteers.

Diane asked Kellie what percentage of the families are Catholic and out of that percentage how many are IHM parishioners? Kellie said IHM school is 83% Catholic and 52% of those are IHM parishioners. Diane added that Kellie, along with IHM's pastor, Fr. Jowdy, have offered catechetical classes to parents of students that might need to understand our faith a little better. Fr. Jowdy is very supportive of the school.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Diane gave a positive update on GRACE and said that 100% of the donations will be counted this year. GRACE is the largest individual contribution SSO in Georgia with 6.2 million in donations. About 2/3 of that total will go to the Atlanta Catholic Schools.

Diane shared good news that the lawsuit a former teacher filed to recover the \$2,500 in liquidated damages which was assessed when she broke her contract with one of our schools has been dropped.

Diane advised that it has come to her attention that many of our school employees and others do not understand how our schools are funded. She plans to communicate this process to the teachers and principals for a better understanding. This information is especially helpful to those school employees who have children in our schools and are seeking a parish verification form from their pastor in order to get the participating Catholic rate or to be considered for financial aid.

A conversation followed regarding Catherine Spencer, Director of Faith Formation at Holy Redeemer, who passed away suddenly in early January while on a faculty retreat at Ignatius House. She had previously served as Principal of St. Peter Claver Catholic School for seven years. Catherine was a few months away from receiving her doctorate degree from Catholic University when she passed. She will be greatly missed.

The Martin Luther King event will be at St. Peter Claver on Sunday, January 20th. St. Thomas More's Kindergarten students will entertain the crowd with their singing and Archbishop will be in attendance. The 12th Annual Archbishop's Banquet for Catholic Education will held on Saturday, January 26, 2019 at the Marietta Hilton & Conference Center. The event is sold out and a waiting list is now in place. Each school honors an employee of the year. There will also be a principal of the year (Kellie DesOrmeaux) and a preschool director of the year to be honored.

- **Council Visits - Feedback**

St. Pius –Marcos Arias visited St. Pius in December and said all the communication and correspondence leading up to the meeting was handled proficiently and in a timely manner. No clergy was present at the meeting. Discussions were had regarding the 4 phases of their school's long-term master plan. Because of their lack of space, St. Pius is always open to opportunities for expansion but they utilize their present space very efficiently. St. Pius has a good relationship with the Chamblee police and security drills are frequent. Their open house doubled over last year with 1,000 in attendance. Diane commented that having the president/principal relationship at St. Pius has worked very well. St. Pius has adopted a new admissions software tracking system called Ravenna. It has proven to be very beneficial. This along with strong feeder school relationships and strong admissions directors have helped with admissions at St. Pius X.

Diane commented that we have to work harder on dispelling the myth that our schools are all full. Many believe our schools are full and not worth even applying. Only a small number of our schools are full to capacity.

- **Committee Reports**

Brian Dooling gave a report on **Marketing & Admissions** saying that he has been working on meeting with all the admission directors to discuss best practices and collaborate on what's working and not working for them. He has encouraged them to share with each other rather than working independently. Brian said that 2 advertisements have recently been placed. One in the Georgia Bulletin and the other in the Atlanta Parent Magazine January issue. The ad promotes all the Atlanta Archdiocesan Catholic Schools as a system. The Atlanta Parent Magazine displayed our ad on their inside cover. They distribute 85,000 copies around the Atlanta area with a readership of 240,000 because of its exposure in doctors' offices throughout the city. The schools would never have been able to afford this on their own but with all participating in the cost it became a reality.

Brian said he is also focusing on the schools that need our assistance with enrollment by helping them launch parent ambassador programs, create promotional videos, form enrollment committees etc. His goal is to teach them what to do and to encourage them to get parent champions to steer this endeavor. Market segments to capture for enrollment are the Latino population and the millennials. The millennials do most of their research online so having appealing videos available on the website to show the school, classrooms, activities etc. is greatly needed. A separate website for Catholic Schools is on the horizon in the attempt to make it more user friendly for those prospective parents and to promote Catholic education.

Marcos asked Brian if it has been considered reaching out to some major corporations on the southside of Atlanta (i.e. Delta, Coca-Cola, Chick-fil-a, Porche) to let them know we have schools near their place of work that they can promote to employees with school age children. Brian said it was worth looking into.

A discussion followed.

- **Future Business**

For future business for the Policy Committee, Diane had a policy to share with the council from the Diocese of Los Angeles on Uber showing up on campuses. Another policy that needs addressing is one for service/comfort animals for employees. There have been some interesting requests recently. Any policy will have to be approved by Human Resources and the archdiocesan attorneys.

The strategic planning committee will need to be published soon and Diane has forwarded a large file to that committee chair. Diane also mentioned that the Ad-Hoc Committee will need to take a look at Ave Maria School in Newnan. They have submitted a binder to Diane in hopes of obtaining Catholic status from Archbishop in the next year. They presently have 24 students and are 15 minutes away from Our Lady of Victory.

Council Self-Evaluation will be discussed at the March meeting. Catholic Schools' Week coming up with all its many activities.

- **Adjournment**

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 12 at 7:30am at the Chancery.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler
Schools' Program Specialist