

## Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

Zoom Meeting – 7:30-9:00am

**In Attendance:** Hal Plummer, Beth Morrison-Chair, John Cryer-Vice Chair, Marcos Arias, Brad Wilson, Brian Dooling, Bob Heilmann, Maureen McAbee, Michelle Raney, Jennifer Prindiville, Brian Hershberger, Fr. Neil Dhaliwala, Stacy Lewis, Cathy Kennedy Harris. **Absent:** Christopher White. **Visitor:** Mark Tolcher.

- **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**

Beth called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked Fr. Neil to lead the council in prayer.

- **Approval of Agenda**

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

- **Approval of the Minutes from the August 2020 Meeting**

Beth asked if there were any changes to the August 2020 ASAC Meeting Minutes. With no changes stated, Beth asked for a motion to approve the August meeting minutes. The motion was given and seconded.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Hal expressed his gratitude for everyone's attendance and flexibility for the meeting today. Hal then introduced Mark Tolcher as a visitor to our meeting this morning. Mark is the Director of Enrollment at Blessed Trinity High School and a graduate program student at the University of Dayton. One of the requirements is for him to experience a school matter at the Diocesan level. Hal asked Mark to say a few words to the council members.

### COVID-19

Hal then proceeded to update the council on COVID numbers in the schools since the last meeting in August. Due to Halloween and a few high school parties, there was an uptick in positive cases. We are now at about 1.4% of positive cases since the beginning of the school year. Hal said that although any number of cases is terrible, this is very manageable and proves how effective our system is working. He added that our quarantine protocols are stricter than what is recommended by the state and county. These positive cases in the schools have been attributed to outside events. Stacy Lewis spoke on behalf of Marist and said that they are planning to return full time in person after Thanksgiving as they had a similar spike in cases after Halloween due to parties. Hal said we are moving forward as best we can under the frustration of circumstances out of our control and asked for prayers from the council. Beth Morrison and Cathy Kennedy Harris spoke on behalf of St. Pius X and commended leadership at the school for their transparency to the parents after these Halloween events took place when the school had to shut down as a result. Marcos Arias added that the transparency has been greatly appreciated at Blessed Trinity as well.

### Southside Feasibility Study

Hal gave a quick summary on this study saying that surveys were in from parents and teachers of OLM/OLV and now parishes in their deanery will receive surveys. According to Diane Starkovich, the study should be completed before Christmas. This is ahead of the original proposed completion date of January 20<sup>th</sup>. Hal said the sooner we receive the recommendations from the task force the better so decisions we can move forward. Hal then asked Marcos Arias and Brian Dooling to comment on the study. Marcos said that he was impressed by the pace at which this process has moved along. He added that the task force realizes emotions are involved for those affected by this change and for this reason it is extremely important for us to be transparent and communicate the higher purpose in any decisions that are made. Brian mentioned that a town hall is scheduled at Holy Trinity Parish in Peachtree City on December 15<sup>th</sup> to gauge possible interest in a K-12 Catholic School at Our Lady of Mercy Campus in Fayetteville, if that is the recommendation. Hal said he hopes by the next meeting we will know the recommendation and can begin to discuss how this council will be involved. Marcos said he will bring the recommendation to the CENGI board meeting.

### Leadership Positions

IHM and St. Catherine principal openings are now posted both locally and nationally on several Catholic job sites and we will be reviewing the applicants over the next few months. Search committees are being formed at both IHM and SCS. No hiring is planned at this time for OLV/OLM. John Favier will be named St. Pius X's new president beginning January 1, 2021. Edye will be the principal and with this restructuring of leadership the Office of Catholic Schools will be assisting. Connie will be mentoring Edye in her role as principal, Brian will mentor John on the marketing piece and Kellie will assist with the deans on curriculum. Hal said advertising for the President's position at BT will begin after Thanksgiving.

### Professional Development

Hal advised that the Office of Catholic Schools continues to hold monthly Principal Meetings virtually as well as separate meetings for the new principals. Hal looks forward to working with the principals individually in the spring for a more targeted discussion on their goals and professional development.

### Education Banquet

Hal asked Brian to speak on the decision regarding the banquet this coming year. Brian advised the council that a decision was made not hold our annual banquet this year out of an abundance of caution due to the pandemic. Alternate plans are being made to honor each school's employee-of-the-year as well as a principal of the year and a preschool director of the year. Brian is going to reach out to our usual banquet sponsors to see if they are willing to support us financially in providing scholarships that we have offered as a result of the proceeds from this annual event.

### Diversity Update

Hal advised that since our first diversity training which took place at the Chancery, best practices are being developed. Additional training will be scheduled to discuss this topic in more depth. Hal said that the future training will be based on Bishop Lori's text in the American magazine entitled "How church teaching can help explain why Black Lives Matter".

### School Assessment Visits and Viability Index

Hal, Connie and Kellie have begun their fall school visits. The checklist that Diane used for is still being utilized. The viability index has been revised and the principals will be given the revisions and are expected to complete those in the near future.

### Curriculum Meetings/ACRE Testing

Kellie has started meetings with her Math curriculum team on standards being that will be piloted for the 2021-2022 school year. Music and Technology will follow the same timeline. ACRE testing is being moved to the Spring of 2021. This is for 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

### Policy Overview

Marcos being chair of the Policy Committee along with Beth will be accessing our current policies to determine which need updating, which need removal and those that need to be added.

### Parish Verification Form

Brian Dooling advised that the Parish Verification Form has been updated and will be circulated to all parishes as well as enrollment and admissions directors at each school. Blessed Trinity, Queen of Angels and Holy Redeemer will be using this form for the first time.

### GRACE Scholars

Brian asked the council to help promote GRACE Scholars. The funds are coming in at a slower pace than previous years. This program allows more students to enroll in our schools. Brian Hershberger asked for the number of students that have benefitted from the GRACE Scholars program. Brad Wilson said he would send out the GRACE annual report which provides all that data. At the request of Beth Morrison, Brian Dooling said he would supplement the annual report with some suggested talking points in promoting GRACE.

### Teacher In-Service

Hal commented on the success of the Teacher In-Service which took place virtually on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Being keynote speaker at this event, Hal was able to share with the school community how the Lord has worked in his life on a daily basis. The highlight of the day was the mass and wonderful homily by Archbishop Hartmayer. Jennifer Prindiville listened to the homily and said it was evident of Archbishop's love and commitment to Catholic education. She also said anyone, especially teachers, listening to his message would have been inspired. Hal expressed how extremely blessed we are to have an Archbishop who is also an educator and understands the importance of Catholic education.

- **Committee Reports**

### Executive Committee

Beth reported that the executive committee met on October 30, 2020 to plan this meeting and discuss progress on new and pre-existing initiatives.

### Marketing Committee

Brian Dooling reported that the marketing committee met on October 14, 2020 to discuss an action plan to review and update the marketing toolkit originally developed in 2009 and last revised in 2016. It was decided that the marketing committee members would divide-up and interview each school's admission

director to determine their specific needs. A list of questions have been developed to assist in this interview process. Once all the data is collected, the marketing committee will re-group and come up with a new and improved marketing toolkit.

Brian advised that a Catholic Schools' advertisement was placed on the back page of the October 27<sup>th</sup> issue of the Georgia Bulletin. He also informed the council that the principals are now receiving weekly newsletters from the Office of Catholic Schools in an attempt to consolidate information going out to them. NCEA has developed a new program called Discover Catholic Schools Week, which is happening this week. This program is designed to promote Catholic School Education and is separate from the annual Catholic Schools Week we celebrate at the end of January each year. Many of our schools, due to COVID restrictions, have developed virtual tours. Brian said most of our events are now being held virtually including the MLK Youth Day. Maureen McAbee asked if the marketing committee has thought about surveying new families from this year to see how they feel about our schools. Brian said that is a great idea and something we should definitely pursue but the restrictions in place this year with the pandemic limits the new family's ability to interact and feel a part of the community. Brian added that it is a real challenge to pull people in as a community under these conditions. Hal said this topic will be discussed at the next principals' meeting. A discussion followed regarding enrollment and a projection for the future.

#### Finance Committee

Brad Wilson said the finance committee will be meeting the following week to discuss block grants and teacher salary increases for 2021-2022 school year. These two proposals will then be presented electronically to this council for approval.

- **Local Council Visits**

Beth inquired the status of the sign-up sheets for local school council visits and asked if there were any spots still open. Brian said he would re-circulate the sign-up sheet for the benefit of those council members who did not get a chance to sign up yet. He also said meeting reminders will go out each month to those who are on the schedule to attend a local council meeting. The principal will be advised of the ASAC member's visit along with a request that they be included on any correspondence prior to the meeting. Beth asked council members to let her or Brian know if you are scheduled for a meeting soon and have not gotten any communication from either the principal or the chair of that local school council.

Beth asked Michele Raney to report on her school council visit. Michele attended Holy Redeemer's meeting on October 26, 2020 via zoom. Materials were provided to Michele in advance and it was a very positive and engaging meeting. Marketing was a big topic bringing up creative ideas on how to keep the marketing engagement going and welcome new families to the community during this pandemic. They even spoke of positive takeaways as a result of the pandemic including new carpool procedures and the convenience of zoom meetings. Much excitement was expressed on their new Ren Web conversion and website. They are presently working on their viability index. Other discussions included budgeting for new business and travel restrictions during the holidays. Their COVID numbers were great as of the date of the meeting.

Beth asked if there were any other visits to report. With no others mentioned, Brian advised that a few of the council visit dates have been changed so he will update the current list of meetings and advise where coverage is still needed.

- **All Advisory Council In-Service Feedback**

Brian Dooling said he received positive feedback on the All Advisory Council Event that was held via zoom on Saturday, September 26, 2020. There were approximately 150 participants, which is a larger number than the usual in-person attendance. A survey was not given out to participants this year.

- **Other Important Items of Interest**

Beth opened the floor up for any other items of interest or questions council members may have. Jennifer Prindiville inquired whether virtual learning policies would remain in effect in a post-Covid environment. Hal said that was an excellent question and something we need to discuss more. Brian Dooling added that Blessed Trinity had been practicing virtual days since 2014 and were ahead of the game on this transition to virtual learning last spring. The other schools had more of a learning curve but have adapted well to virtual learning due to the pandemic. There was a discussion as to whether snow days will now be a thing of the past and the benefits of in-person instruction vs. virtual learning.

Brian Hershberger addressed student retention and asked whether there is any follow up by the Archdiocese to capture information from these families on the reason for their departure. Brian Dooling said there is an attempt to get that information from families but it is currently being done at the local school level. Brian Dooling agreed that it would be very helpful to get collective data to spot trends on an archdiocesan level. Hal added that he would like to see an archdiocesan committee formed to collect and evaluate data on student retention along with additional data from teachers leaving so we can improve retention issues on both fronts. Beth said that doing this at the archdiocesan level would not only help marketing efforts but also be helpful in exposing other issues going on at a particular school that might not otherwise ever be revealed.

Beth thanked Mark Tolcher for joining the meeting and asked if he had any questions or feedback from his attendance today. Mark said he was very impressed with the manner in which this council functions.

- **Adjournment & Closing Prayer**

Meeting adjourned at 9:23am. Next meeting date is January 12, 2021 (7:30-9:00am). Beth asked Fr. Neil to lead us in a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler  
Schools' Program Specialist