

Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting

Tuesday, 6-14-22

In-Person Meeting – 7:30-9:00am

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

- **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**

Beth Morrison joined us remotely and opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and asked Fr. Neil to lead us in an opening prayer.

- **Approval of Agenda**

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

- **Approval of the Minutes**

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

- **Superintendent's Report**

Hal started out by saying the end of the year has been quite intense. St. Pius X, in particular, has had some major challenges. John Favier, the president of SPX, has resigned. There was an announcement made at SPX that starting with the 2023-2024 school year, pants would be the required uniform for girls. In addition to that, it was announced that there would no longer be chaplains at our 3 archdiocesan high schools due to lack of priests and that the existing chaplains have been reassigned. This has caused a high volume of push back from the parents.

Moving forward for this coming school year, Aaron Parr has been assigned as interim president and Edye Simpson, principal at St. Pius X, will directly report to Connie Urbanski, Associate Superintendent of Schools. Hal gave a little history as to how he believes the present situation at St. Pius X has evolved and said a letter from him to the parent community will go out soon addressing all these issues. Hal read the letter to the council. In short, he addresses steps being taken for the lack of chaplains at the school by announcing that St. Pius, as well as the other high schools, will be expanding their campus ministry personnel and bring back mission trips, etc. The Archbishop has asked parishes to assist with masses, reconciliation, spiritual direction and any other spiritual needs the high schools may have. As to the female dress code issue, pants will be an option and not mandatory. Parents and students are being asked to give full support to the current dress code policy in the handbook as this policy will be strictly enforced moving forward. Hal said he is going to meet with the St. Pius X community to answer questions and address expectations for the coming school year on Wednesday, July 27th. A lengthy discussion followed.

Other changes in our schools are that Ramon Villacura will be the new principal at St. Joseph-Marietta and Mandy Crock will be taking over as principal at Our Lady of the Assumption. Both Pat Allen and Lisa Cordell have retired as principals at St. Joseph's and Our Lady of the Assumption respectively. The present Assistant Principal at OLA, Tonya Shoemaker, has been hired by the Office of Catholic Schools to be the Coordinator of Faith Formation for all the Archdiocesan Catholic schools. She will

start the year out splitting her time between OLA and OCS due to the new management at OLA. In January, she will be full time with the Office of Catholic Schools.

Julie Broom has also announced her retirement as principal of St. John Neumann Regional Catholic School and the Interim Principal will be Mike Remshik. Julie will come in a few days a week the first semester to help transition Mike into his new leadership role at the school.

Maureen McAbee asked Hal if he was in agreement with the chaplain decision at the high schools. Hal said he was not part of the decision but is trying to stay positive and make the most of this unfortunate situation.

Hal briefly discussed the policy committee and said he will be working to include a member of the Office of Catholic Schools to join the committee and actively participate in this project of policy manual review and revisions.

Hal asked Brian Dooling to discuss some administrative items. Brian said a few members of the ASAC will be rolling off the council at the end of this month so we are looking for their replacements. He said the goal is to have diversified geographical representation to get a more well-rounded perspective on issues pertaining to our schools. Brian said typically we ask principals to give us recommendations of council members that may have completed terms at their school and would like to serve on this council. Also, the ASAC needs to elect new officers for the 2022-2023 school year.

- **Committee Reports**

Marketing Committee – Brian Dooling said that the schools are now implementing their summer plans with sprucing up their schools for next year. The schools are also putting in their request to Bishops to get on their calendar for at least one school mass in the coming year. The Admissions and Advancement Directors' recently met via zoom to discuss best practices and collaborate. Brian said we have worked with Peer Pal for the past several years to create parent ambassador programs in our schools. There has been some changes in their management so it is undetermined if we will continue this program. We are presently reviewing school websites to make sure they are user-friendly. Security audits will be conducted at each of our schools during the summer. Hal said each school will work independently with their local law enforcement but said there will be certain non-negotiables that must be adhered to. Marcos Arias added that preparation is key. Knowing who is responsible for what in the case of an attack and then practicing these roles. Brian reminded everyone of the Eucharistic Congress coming up on June 17-18. The Synodial feedback is being summarized and will be available for review in the near future. Brian gave a brief enrollment update. He mentioned that he would soon be attending a conference on how to grow Latino enrollment.

Policy Committee – Marcos Arias said he met with Hal and the committee. He said they looked at what other dioceses are doing regarding exceptional learners and admissions. There have been recommendations and considerations along with hopes to sit down with principals to get their input and to run these considerations by Human Resources for approval. Marcos also expressed the need for someone in the Office of Catholic Schools to take the lead on this project. With all these things taken into consideration, Marcos said the committee is prepared to move forward on this project into the next school year. Hal said he will work to get someone, either from our office or a retired principal to assist with this committee.

Finance Committee – Brad Wilson said qualifying for a GRACE Scholarship is based on financial need and some schools receive more money than they have need. He said we may be missing the mark and marketing to the wrong set of people.

Parish Verification Forms are required each year to receive the active Catholic tuition discount in our schools. The pastor of the parish the family belongs to is the only one who can sign off on this documentation. We will need to send a reminder to the schools to ensure their students are supplying them with this form each year. If they do not get the form signed, the higher tuition will be applied.

Brad said that we are looking at standardizing the application process for financial aid. We run this process through FACTS Tuition. Presently, each school can choose their own settings on the application form causing different results when families are applying to two or more schools. We will work on getting these applications more standardized so that the calculation of determining the need is consistent across the board even though some schools can satisfy more need than others.

Hal said we have hired a company to do a feasibility study on school growth that will be rolled out next year. One of the areas they will look at is serving our Hispanic communities. More information on this to follow.

Brad encouraged everyone to check out St. Mary's Academy's beautiful campus. Hal added that their new website will be up and running soon.

GRACE Scholars contribution will go up to \$5,000 max per couple for next year.

- **School Visits**

Maureen McAbee visited Blessed Trinity's local council meeting. It was a good meeting and they were very welcoming. Stacy Lewis visited Immaculate Heart of Mary and said the meeting was very organized and much was spoken of their strategic plan. They discussed the need for a full time marketing person. Great visit!

- **Other Important Items of Interest**

Brian Hershberger mentioned that he, Stacy, Brad, Brenda Leslie and Marquita had a great meeting on equitable employee benefits and funding. He hopes to get the committee back again this summer.

Brian Dooling honored Marcos Arias with a departing gift and thanked him for his dedicated service to this council for so many years. We are grateful that John Cryer decided to remain on the council for another term.

- **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9am. Next meeting will be Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 7:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler
Schools' Program Specialist