

Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting

Tuesday, 1-10-23

In-Person Meeting – 7:30-9:00am

In Attendance: Diane Starkovich, John Cryer-Chair, Brad Wilson, Brian Dooling, Maureen McAbee, Brian Hershberger, Michelle Raney, Jennifer Prindiville, Beth Morrison, Fr. Neil Dhaliwala, Julie Broom. **Absent:** Stacy Lewis, Cathy Kennedy Harris.

- **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**

John Cryer called the meeting to order and Diane Starkovich led the council in an opening prayer.

- **Welcome and Introductions**

John welcomed everyone to the meeting and went over the agenda for this morning's meeting.

- **Approval of Agenda**

John asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was given, seconded and approved by all.

- **Approval of the Minutes**

John then asked for a motion to approve the November 2022 minutes. The motion was given, seconded and approved by all.

- **Julie Broom, Ed.D., Updated Mission and Belief Statements**

Julie Broom gave two handouts to council members. She said when meeting with the principals they reviewed goals from the last 5 years and worked collaboratively to come up with new goals going forward for the next 5 years. Some of these look very much the same as before but there are new ones added. They are as follows:

Goal 1: Ongoing development of our Catholic identity by infusing it in all aspects of our students and their families' school experience

Goal 2: Engage the families of our students in learning opportunities that help deepen their faith and build a commitment to the sacramental, liturgical, service and prayer life expected of us as members of the Church and the larger Christian community.

Goal 3: Identify, recruit, enroll, and retain students in our Catholic schools.

Goal 4: Increase student engagement through purposeful use of effective pedagogies and sound evidence-based practices.

Goal 5: Formalize students' positive relationships with specific adults in the school community in support of social-emotional health.

Diane asked for input on these 5 goals. Maureen McAbee asked how the data was collected to come up with goal number two regarding family involvement in their children's faith. Julie said that much is revealed from the students. Diane said the parish verification form will also determine if the families are practicing Catholics. Fr. Neil said it is a real challenge for pastors because some are registered parishioners and give online but rarely show up for mass and others are parishioners in other parishes

where we have no idea how active they are. Diane said we want to make it clear to our families that the primary goal in Catholic education is to pass the faith on to our children. Fr. Neil asked about goal number 5. Julie and Diane gave examples to explain.

The second handout included the mission statement, vision statement & beliefs. Julie said they received input from the community on the verbiage of the mission statement which is not much different than the previous statement. She asked council members to read over the mission and vision statements and beliefs and comment on anything they feel needs editing. Diane said the principals worked very hard on this and that it is a requirement to address and update goals, mission statements and beliefs as we enter into an accreditation cycle. Fr. Neil suggested a change of one word in the mission statement **from ministries to mission**. Once the council approves, it will be sent off for the bishops' approval. Approval was granted.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Diane started out by addressing the Meitler Study which is presently being conducted in our Atlanta Catholic schools. She said we have used them for studies in the past to determine which location would most benefit from having a Catholic School. Meitler is assisting with studying the Gainesville/Flowery Branch areas on February 15 & 16, 2023 where they will spend 2 full days meeting with the surrounding parish pastors and give a recommendation. Diane said there is a huge number of children not being served in that area with a strong desire for Catholic education. There are many facets to this study but right now we are in the fact-gathering stage. Diane said it will be exciting and interesting to see where this leads us. Julie added that St. John Paul II Catholic Mission in Gainesville, GA has 4000 families consisting of mostly Latin American families. The parents of these families are looking for a Catholic school for their children but speak primarily Spanish

Moving on from the Meitler study, Diane reported that we are presently working with Partners in Mission on St. Pius X & Blessed Trinity president searches. The ads have been posted and zoom calls are scheduled with both schools. Partners in Mission will spend two days on each campus and interview anywhere from 100-150 people including students, alumni, employees, council members etc. The hope is that by late April/early May we will have candidates for both schools.

Diane said accreditation preparation is in full swing, budget cycles are about to start and teacher salary increases have been approved. In addition, job descriptions are now being reviewed and analyzed by Human Resources. Diane has requested that 6 positions be put on a staff contract. These would apply only to those on exempt status and with advanced degrees. Some hard-to-fill positions such as RN (nurses), custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers received a sizeable increase. The remainder of the staff positions will increase by 5%. There is a salary range for each position based on the candidates experience which gives the school some flexibility.

Diane asked the council if there were any questions. Beth Morrison asked Diane to speak on the Christ the King situation. Diane said that last April Christ the King received a large sum of money from a generous benefactor to be used specifically for teacher salary increases which were considerably over the Archdiocesan scale. The Archbishop approved the change in status and If Christ the King wanted to set its own salary scale, the school would need to become independent. This put Christ the King at 85% of the public school salaries. Because we are a system of schools, Diane said with Christ the King not following our salary scale, we would not be able to pass our accreditation due to the equity requirement. If Christ the King wanted to set their own salary scale, they would need to become independent. The

Archbishop approved their change in status and Brad said they have much to do in this transition process. He said we will try to make it as easy as possible for them and commented that much of the community will not even notice the difference. Beth asked how the council should approach questions about Christ the King going independent. Diane said the message to give them is that the Archbishop has approved their request to become an Independent Catholic school. They will still participate in many activities put on by the Office of Catholic Schools throughout the school year. A lengthy discussion followed.

- **GRACE Update**

Diane announced that the GRACE cap was met on the second day. Those who contributed will receive a letter showing the dollar for dollar contribution made. Make note that it is possible it was prorated. All of our schools increased GRACE contributions this year and Savannah also increased its support.

- **Committee Reports**

Finance Committee – Diane reported that the budget template is done for next year. Block grants have been awarded and letters have gone out to principals. FACTS need analysis was done to come up with a standard practice for all schools to use for qualifying families for financial aid. We are working hard on trying to have more families qualify. Lastly, Diane said an application needs to be created for those schools seeking assistance in meeting the increase in teacher salaries. A tuition increase will help but several of our schools will need additional help. Diane was complemented on the well written letter to the families announcing these changes.

Nominating Committee - Brian Dooling said he has several candidates to serve on the ASAC and has forwarded those names to the Nominating Committee (Brian Hershberger and Jennifer Prindiville). Following this meeting they will go over the process of vetting these individuals and hope to submit the names for approval at the March meeting. At that time, we will discuss whether to bring them on board for the June meeting or wait until August for the next school year.

Policy Committee - Diane said policy updates will be done soon. Chapters 1, 2 & 3 will be done by other departments. Our goal is to have it updated by August or September. Policy #4170 (Salary Scales) has been updated and are presently quite restrictive. Ultimately, all of these will need to be approved by the Archbishop.

Lastly, Diane wanted to follow up on the strategic plan she had promised to share which aligns with the NSBECS. She said she will be at a Superintendents' Conference in late February and has asked for two things: A Principal Evaluation aligned with the NSBECS and Strategic Plan which also aligns with the NSBECS. The feedback we get from the Catholic School satisfaction surveys will also help in developing our Strategic Plan.

John Cryer asked Diane to give a brief update on the council self-evaluation. Diane mentioned that this council has always done a self-evaluation. Diane suggested that we hold off on doing it until after the March council meeting. Brian Dooling will send you a Survey Monkey link after the March meeting which will be anonymous in order to allow for honesty and transparency. Brian will go over the results of the surveys at the June 2023 council meeting. Diane said the council will also need to set goals for the next school year starting in August.

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- **Local Council Visits**

Maureen McAbee asked Diane to give a brief update on her visit to St. Pius X. Diane said it was an excellent meeting. Good committee work, dialog and participation. There was alumni representation on the council.

It was mentioned that there are a good number of schools that need to be visited and Maureen said she would reach out to the principals to verify dates/times due to some rescheduling in the first semester. Diane said she plans to attend St. John the Evangelist council meeting soon. She is also going to St. Mary's Academy to train their new council members as they start up their new council. With all the changes taking place with teacher salaries, tuition increases and Christ the King's status change, Diane expressed that the ASAC council representation at these local school council meetings is of utmost importance.

Jennifer Prindiville visited St. Thomas More. She said this was their first in-person meeting since Covid. This meeting took place after the letter was sent out from Diane explaining the new salary increases for teachers. Jennifer said that as Principal Shaun Bland discussed this to council members they seemed to be 100% on board with the effort to retain teachers. She said it was a very productive meeting.

Michelle Raney visited St. Joseph, Marietta council meeting. They were having their Christmas party that evening but still had a full meeting. Discussions were had about salary increases, creating a strategic plan from scratch and putting together committees to assist in this effort. They also were revising their organizational chart. They expressed a need for additional guidance counselors as 11% of their students need special services. The question was raised as to whether there is a standard ratio of counselors to the number of students in our archdiocesan schools. Brian said he believes in the elementary schools there is only one counselor but offered to check on that and get back to Michelle.

Maureen said upcoming school visits include: Brian going to OLA, Stacy going to IHM and Michelle going to BT. Jennifer asked Maureen to highlight schools that have not yet been visited when she sends out the revised list of local council meetings for the remainder of this school year.

- **Adjournment and Prayer**

John asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00am. The motion was given and seconded. Fr. Neil led the council in a closing prayer. Next Meeting Date is March 14, 2023 at 7:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler
Schools' Program Specialist