

Minutes

Atlanta Archdiocesan Schools' Advisory Council Meeting

Tuesday, 6-13-23

7:30-9:00am

In Attendance: Bishop Joel Konzen, Diane Starkovich, Karen Vogtner, Julie Broom (by phone), John Cryer-Chair, Maureen McAbee, Stacy Lewis, Michelle Raney, Jennifer Prindiville, Brad Wilson, Kevin Murray, Patrick Lowther, Joey Nordmark. **Absent:** Brian Hershberger, Fr. Neil Dhabliwala, Cathy Kennedy Harris, Beth Morrison,

- **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**

John Cryer called the meeting to order at 7:30am. Diane Starkovich led the council in a group prayer and the mission statement was recited together.

- **Introduction of Bishop Konzen**

John Cryer introduced Bishop Konzen to the council. Bishop Konzen spoke a few words and expressed his deep affection for Catholic Schools being a teacher and administrator himself for many years.

- **Introduction of New Council Members**

For the benefit of the new council members, Kevin Murray, Joey Nordmark and Patrick Lowther, John Cryer asked all council members to introduce themselves and give a little personal history.

- **Approval of Agenda**

John asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was given, seconded.

- **Approval of the Minutes**

John then asked for a motion to approve the March 2023 council minutes. The motion was given and seconded.

- **Council Self-Assessment**

Diane explained that the purpose of the self-assessment is to determine where we are presently as a council and where we need to improve. The assessment results were provided in advance of the meeting for members to review. Diane asked if there were any questions or comments. Stacy Lewis asked Diane to explain the true role of an Archdiocesan Schools Advisory Council member. Diane said that this council represents all Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese. They conduct research on policy and make policy recommendations; serve as advisory to the Archbishop and the Superintendent of Schools. She expressed the importance of getting parents' perspective. Each member will be assigned a committee to work on based on their expertise. The committees are as follows: nominating committee, marketing committee, policy committee, finance committee, and this year Diane would like to form a task force to work on St. Mary's Academy's sustainability. Committees meet in between ASAC meetings and are asked to submit a committee report even if no action was taken during that period.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Diane gave an update on the Meitler Study. The study is still in the initial stages and will now be delayed until the fall. They are looking at Flowery Branch and Gainesville as locations to consider for a new school or possibly somewhere in between these two cities. There is a huge Catholic population including a large Hispanic community in the Gainesville area who would benefit from a Catholic School. Diane said the nearby parishes will be given surveys for their parishioners to fill out and the results will be critical in this decision. The study is primarily focused on where we do not have existing schools, so there should not be any concern with competition. Julie Broom added that the surveys are not only to determine who would be interested in sending their children to the schools but also if there would be enough families willing to support the new school financially.

Diane gave a brief update on enrollment at the schools for next year. She said it is mixed with some schools completely full and others being down from last year. She said one year does not create a trend but worth keeping an eye on. Diane said once we have the enrollment numbers from the first day of school, we will know better whether the tuition increases hurt us. Teacher attrition rate is presently around 11% which is much lower than last year so Diane feels the teacher raises definitely helped retain our teachers.

John Cryer brought up the importance of marketing our schools and how the marketing committee on this council can help in this area. Bishop Konzen said that the Office of Mission Advancement should be able to assist schools in this effort. Diane suggested the possibility of someone from that office attending these council meetings.

Diane reminded the council about the Advisory Council In-Service day on Saturday, September 23rd. Also, all new council members are required to attend one of two trainings dates offered here at the Chancery (Saturday, August 26 at 9am or Wednesday, August 30 at 5:30pm). They will last no more than 2 hours.

Diane mentioned that we held a 3-day Summer Institute for Archdiocesan teachers on June 6-8. It went very well with excellent material covered. Karen Vogtner gave a breakdown of the topics offered.
Day 1 – Catholic Social Teaching: Meaningful Ways to Make Faith Connections Across Curriculum.
Day 2 – Depth of Thinking: Building Quality Questions that lead to deeper, long-term learning.
Day 3 – Building Executive Functioning Skills within your lessons.

- **Accreditation Visit – February 11-14**

Diane advised that council members will be invited to meet as a group with the accreditation team during this visit. The schedule has not been set yet but members will be given far enough advance notice. Diane said that accreditation is our primary focus in the coming months. Saint Jude and St. Mary's Academy will receive STEM certification.

- **Committee Reports**

Brad Wilson gave a very brief committee report stating that the tuition hikes were in line with the inflation rate. He said this should remain the standard going forward regarding tuition.

- **Election of Officers 2023-2024**

John Cryer mentioned that he will be stepping down as chair and that Stacy Lewis has agreed to serve as chair for the 2023-2024 School Year. In addition, Brian Hershberger has agreed to serve as vice-chair. These positions are being assigned by acclamation so no vote was necessary.

- **Committee Assignments**

Committee assignments for the remainder of the membership will be up to the individual and their expertise. Members should let Diane or Stacy know what committee they are most interested.

- **School Goals – 2023-2024**

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.

- **Council Meeting Dates – 2023-2024**

August 22, 2023 - this is a recent date change

November 14, 2023

January 9, 2024

March 12 2024

June 11, 2024

All meetings are held on Tuesdays at the Chancery from 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

- **September In-Service**

The Archdiocesan Advisory Council In-Service will be held on Saturday, September 23, 2023 from 9:00am until Noon at the Chancery. All ASAC members as well as all local school advisory council members are encouraged to be in attendance. More information on topics to follow.

- **Recognition of Outgoing Council Member – Fr. Neil**

Fr. Neil was not present at this meeting so we were unable to recognize him at this time. We appreciate his contribution to the council and will present him with a small gift of our gratitude at a later date.

- **Future Business**

Looking forward, Diane brought up several things that we will be working on for next school year.

1. We will need to find a priest to serve on this council. Diane hopes to keep the meeting at 7:30am on Tuesdays but if there is a conflict with the priest we find, we may need to change.
2. There is consideration of having a high school student become part of this council to get a student's perspective.
3. We will soon be putting together a task force on sustainability for St. Mary's Academy. We will need volunteers for this committee.
4. Lastly, the topic of having School Resource Officers on all campuses needs discussion. There are many factors involved to be considered.

A lengthy discussion followed.

- **Adjournment – Next Meeting Date**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15am. Next meeting date is Tuesday, August 15, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler
Schools' Program Specialist