

Regis Catholic Schools
Education Commission Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2019
Regis Room 107, 5:00 pm

Present: Fr. Sakowski, Fr. Oudenhoven, Mark Gobler, Paul Pedersen, Linda Schultz, Becky Alexander, Reid Sollberger, Linda Marx, Carisa Smiskey, Meghan Kulig, Gayle Flaig, Jackie Lutz, Kayla Bahnub, Bill Spangler, Ashley Wolterstorff (recorder)

Absent: Fr. Kurzynski, Fr. Krieg, Fr. Sedlacek, Fr. Tadathil, Renee Cassidy, Brian Hoeschen

I. Meeting called to order – Reid Sollberger 5:02 pm

Opening Prayer, Fr. Sakowski

A correction to Brian Hoeschen's name was made to the August minutes.

Minutes from August were approved by Linda Schultz and 2nd by Linda Marx.

A comment was made by Fr. Sakowski that due to the on-going theft investigation, nothing could be discussed regarding the case at the meeting. The situation will be discussed at future meetings when information is ready to be shared.

II. Standing Committee

No reports for Catholic Identity or School Life. Teaching and Learning will have a report in October.

III. Central Office Reports

Accreditation – Jackie Lutz gave the following report. Renee Cassidy visited all of the schools last week and checked looked at their binders. The accreditation team will be coming on November 11 and staying for three days. There will be a dinner for the team in the Fr. Klink Hall at IC on November 11.

Communication – Meghan Kulig gave the following report. Planning for the Regis Auction is underway. Invites were mailed out Monday. Raffle pre-sales for gas for a year and a trip to Las Vegas will be starting soon. There have been a lot of teacher volunteers. Donations are still being secured. 300-315 people are expected to attend.

Marketing photo shoots will be held in each of the schools in October.

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School in Independence requested to meet with Meghan and Bill next week. They are looking for suggestions and tips on marketing for their school.

Development Centers

Gayle Flaig gave the following report. Enrollment for 4K is very good. At Regis Child Development Center, there is a boiler project that is underway. Glenn Berger has been a big help. There was a meeting today with a window company to discuss a window project for spring. They will be testing one window in the next few weeks to make sure there are no surprises when they begin the project. Work is expected to begin in April or May.

The most difficult challenge right now is the staffing shortage. The shortage at our centers is typical of the other day cares in Eau Claire. Gayle is short two people in each center. Our standards are high and the centers have a good reputation in the community.

The before and after care programs at IC are doing well. A few bugs are still being worked out. The staff is good. An additional program was purchased. Tuition and billing are handled in-house. Gayle is looking into expanding the before and after care next year to St. Mary's and St. James, but staffing makes it difficult. More support staff is needed.

Another challenge is how to accommodate families who need care for their children when school is cancelled. Families tend to look to the day care centers for help. It is hard to tell our families we can't provide care, but there is no room and not enough staff to offer services at this time.

Gayle will be talking to Mark in the future about some staffing ideas. Gayle commented on how amazing her management team is.

IV. By-Law Revision(s) Proposals

Fr. Sakowski distributed a copy of the Bylaws for the Regis Catholic Schools Education Committee and Proposed Structural Revisions of Finance Committee. This is not a formal proposal and feedback is still being received.

Healthcare facilities are growing, people are living longer, and the need for pastoral care is great and continues to grow. Priests will be called away more often. The goal of the structural revision is to divvy up the needs of the various committees among the pastors of the supporting parishes. The pastors would then meet with the Dean more frequently throughout the year. Most of the proposed revisions deal with Finance.

Linda Schultz asked about the role of Regis Catholic Schools in Article IV, section 2. Fr. Sakowski noted that a steady flow of information from the Foundation is desired and that Bishop Callahan wants schools to know what the Foundation does. This need could possibly be satisfied by the Foundation providing a report. In the revision process, it should be made clear how all of the committees should work and who they report to, especially the Finance Committee.

It was noted that YTD reports will start to be included in the reports given to the Commission, but the goal of this group is not to get bogged down in the numbers. Fr. Sakowski said the Finance Committee should express concerns, but ultimately should not be making decisions. He also indicated that the Commission needs a very brief summary of the finances available to them at meetings.

Mark Gobler commented that the Diocese is asking for monthly financial reports. He also said that the Controller used to attend Commission meetings, but that attendance just fell off. He also indicated that the Advancement Director will be giving reports at Commission meetings in the future.

A conversation was had about what the membership selection of the Management Committee should be. The desire is to have a well-rounded committee. Bill Spangler noted that a list of suggested characteristics might be helpful for priests to have when they are making appointments. He also expressed that with many organizational committees, there is usually an Annual Meeting where new officers are elected. Mark Gobler and Bill Spangler will work together to get an updated digital copy of the bylaws.

It was also noted that the School Life Committee and the Advancement Committee should be removed from the by-laws (if it they are not already removed on current copy).

V. Old Business

Snow Day Drop Off Mark Gobler reported on the survey that was sent out to staff to see if there was enough interest to support offering child care on snow days. Most of the staff who said they would be able to work were from the high school, but many had stipulations tied to their availability. Other questions in regards to cost, location, and food still remain. It was decided that snow day drop off will not be an option for this year. Mark will mention in his letter in the next Rambler Report.

Enrollment Update Mark Gobler gave the enrollment update and passed out 2019-20 Enrollment Data reports. It is possible that the high school could be under 200 students in the next two years.

Paul Pedersen reported that there was a big drop this year between 8th and 9th grade. There are no consistent reasons why this drop happened. There was no gender difference. Athletics were not a factor. It appears that in several instances, the kids were the ones making the decisions, not the parents. There seems to be the perception of more course offerings at other schools. Historically, Regis has done a good job with retention. This year was different, and it was a bit of a surprise.

Paul indicated that conversations on what Regis can do to help families feel connected will continue in coming weeks. One idea is to have “parent ambassadors” at each grade who would reach out and welcome new families. A “buddy system” to connect younger middle students with older high school students is also an idea. Paul will talk with Sharyn Moss, the Home and School representative, about how some of these changes can happen. Another idea that will be pursued is how we can create more of a family culture/feel in the school and connect families in the transition years. Paul and Suzy Sturz will be working with 5th grade families to help the transition into middle school. We will need to look at defining who and what we are, as a system, and promoting those values.

Years Verified on Commission Reid Sollberger verified that Linda Marx has another year on her term.

VI. New Business

Crisis Speaker Ted Hayes Mark Gobler reported that Ted Hayes' presentation on school safety was one of the most engaging in-services ever. Ted spoke candidly on how to protect students during a crisis. He went into each building to answer questions and give suggestions. Ted was happy to see Regis is using Crisis Go.

Financial Update Fr. Sakowski reported that the Finance Committee meetings are being held monthly, even through summer. Work is being done to re-structure. Progress is being made and positive results are anticipated.

Alliance Prevention of Substance Abuse Paul Pedersen reported that the Alliance Prevention of Substance Abuse, which is run through the City, lost its public funding. They are approaching area schools to see what can be done to continue to prevent substance abuse in the community. We will work to partner with them in their endeavors.

VII. School Reports

Paul Pedersen indicated the year is off to a good start. In addition to his written report, he shared that the student body decided that tonight's "out" at the volleyball game is a "purple out" in honor of the students from Clayton who died in a car crash. Jackie Lutz remarked that the Eau Claire Fire Chief was impressed with the Crisis Go app when he was there for a fire drill. The Chief will be contacting John Cook for more details.

Closing Prayer, Fr. Sakowski
Meeting Adjourned 6:30 pm

Ashley Wolterstorff (recorder)