

St. Francis of Assisi School Board of Education Minutes

June 13, 2024

Board Members Present:

Father Joe Pins (Pastor)
 William Downs (Chair)
 Brenda Pedersen (Vice Chair)
 Andrew Phillips
 Phil Stover
 Kaba Kayemba

Not Present:

Steve Craig (Secretary)

Prepared by: Steve Craig

Called to Order: 6:30 p.m.

Adjourned: 8:00 p.m.

Location: Serra Conference Room

Minutes Prepared By: _____
 Andrew M. Phillips and Brenda Pedersen

Others Present:

Jeff Lynch (School Principal).
 Jamie Zabel (Assistant Principal)
 Wendy Henry (Preschool Director)
 Thomas Call (Parish Council Rep)
 Heather Darling (Guest, Parent)
 Molly Mertens (Guest, Parent)
 Sharon McCurnin (Guest, Parent)

Audra Meyer (Guest, Parent)
 Beth Seidl (Guest, Parent)
 Kathy Hansen (Guest, Grandparent)
 Kristin Jacobs (Guest, Parent)
 Mickie Alsin (Guest, Teacher)
 Bick Carfrae (Guest, Parent)

AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION/DISCUSSION	NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS
<p>Call to Order & Opening Prayer</p>	<p>William Downs called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and Father Pins led an opening prayer. Minutes from the May 19, 2024 Board of Education meeting were discussed. It was determined that updated minutes were needed from the May meeting. Updated meeting minutes were to be prepared and circulated among interested parties via e-mail for approval.</p>	<p>Call to Order and Opening Prayer. Prepare updated May meeting minutes for approval of the Board via e-mail.</p>
<p>Open Forum / ELA Issue</p>	<p>An open forum was held at the request of several parents to discuss proposed curriculum changes at the middle school level.</p> <p>Principal Lynch and Assistant Principal Zabel spoke on behalf of the school indicating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Proposed changes to the ELA (English Language Arts) curriculum outlined in a May 29, 2024 e-mail were not intended to be finalized changes and would only occur if the school could not hire a suitable teacher for ELA programming. * The school intends to hire a new teacher for the position. 	<p>The school will continue to review applications and report to the school community on their plans once an ELA instructor is hired.</p> <p>Phil Stover will follow-up with the non-board member attendees via e-mail thanking them for attending the meeting.</p>

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	<p>* The school has identified several applicants and will begin interviewing candidates in the near future.</p> <p>* Will considering addition options if they do not hire an ELA teacher before the school starts such as long-term substitute.</p> <p>Beth Seidl read from a letter on behalf of herself and other families who've expressed concerns. She had five points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The contradictions between May 29, 2024 email to what is now being communicated to parents and if Dioceses Policy 326 was being followed. 2) Referencing the May email stating that if it is currently difficult for teachers to build a cohesive ELA curriculum then how will it work incorporating ELA into other subjects and how will ensure it's effective? 3) Expressed concern incoming sixth graders would lose 1.5 years of learning due to the proposed change and how would that set them up for success at Dowling. 4) The May email gave the appearance that this would be a long-term solution and that it was in the works prior to late resignation. 5) What efforts have been made to hire a ELA teacher, where is the data that shows student scores and what training has been completed for teachers. <p>Lastly, she would like to see the school develop opportunities for students to engage in high volume ELA instruction.</p> <p>Kathy Hansen spoke on behalf of parents with concerns providing her experience of 46 years in the education field teaching, administrating, and consulting. She provided three areas of concern:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) ELA Curriculum and Instruction – Best practice is a designated block of time w/explicit instruction in areas of reading, writing and listening and most schools offering two period blocks at least 90 minutes. 2) Provide Content Area Reading/Writing Instruction/training to staff that will help supplement the designated block of ELA instruction– AEA (Area Education Agency) has course examples that can be used. 3) Adjusting the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) from a 45 min block to more common time 20-30 minutes. To be effective the time needs to have a clear purpose and goals. Training and collaboration with staff is key to successful MTSS. <p>Lastly, she provided suggestions for other solutions beyond what was given on the May 29, 2024 email such as long-term sub-candidate, finding a mid-year candidate, re-arranging schedules, etc.</p>	<p>Mr. Lynch will review and update the parent/student handbook to outline the grievance process.</p>

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	<p>Audra Meyer referenced an earlier email she sent about her concern outlining 4 areas of improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Literacy Instruction with an emphasis on standards-based grading practices /in the MTSS framework. Meeting Tier 1, 2, and 3 instruction and how to ensure standards are being met with high turnover rate since COVID. 2) Renewed approach to assessment practices/processes and improvements to support the students learning. 3) Continued support of administration and faculty through development and coaching. Ensuing plans are in place, support is provided, and are their ways the dioceses can add in these efforts. 4) Increased transparency with stakeholders (such as parents and board members) to include standardize tests and individual classroom work. <p>The Chair requested that any written remarks made by the speakers be sent to him separately for his review and consideration. The Board then moved into closed session.</p> <p>Principal Lynch and Assistant Principal Zabel indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * This possible change arose due to a sudden, unexpected resignation. * The proposed solution would only be implemented in the event no suitable instructor is hired before the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year * They are looking for the right candidate for the open role, and they are interviewing interested applicants in the coming weeks. * Currently there are 84 minutes of instruction in ELA, this will move to around 60 minutes, including intensive instruction in writing and grammar for 45 minutes every other day and 45 minutes of reading every day. * A new instructor would focus on writing fundamentals. * The school is exploring other options, including a long-term substitute should no suitable candidate materialize. <p>The Board noted that the grievance process included in the Handbook needs to be updated, and that any future by-laws should reference this grievance process. Principal Lynch agreed to review the grievance process located in the Handbook and update it as appropriate.</p>	

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Pastoral Update	Father Pins provided the following update: * The building is undergoing summer cleaning over the next few weeks, including carpeting and repainting of several hallways. * Vacation Bible School is next week. * Results from the DMI were recently sent to Father Pins. He will do a deep dive on these results over the summer with parish staff in order to review the parish's strengths and opportunities going forward.	
Report from SFA School Principal Jeff Lynch & Assistant Principal Jamie Zabel	Jeff Lynch provided the following update: * Adjustments made to school car line start- 7:55am, with students in the classroom at 8:10am. * The school calendar has been updated. Communication has not yet been sent out about the new start time. * SFA received a \$50,000 safety grant, school is going to make changes to the front door to make it automatically lock like the rest of the school doors, instead of the key lock currently in place. * A new STEM teacher, Samantha Hartman from Ankeny has been hired. * FAST/ISASP test results are in, and parents should have access through log-in.	
Report from SFA Preschool Director Wendy Henry	Wendy said they have filled the two vacant Pre-K teaching positions for next year. They are very pleased with the quality of applicants for the positions. They still need to fill one vacant Associate position in the 3 year-old classroom.	
Committee Updates	Due to time constraints, Committee Updates were omitted.	

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<p>Work on Bylaws for New Leadership Council</p>	<p>Several small changes to the bylaws were discussed such as the expected process for how to address concerns with administration and Council.</p> <p>Changes to bylaws will be discussed via e-mail. Father Pins also needs to review the bylaws.</p> <p>It was determined that the new Leadership Council will look to approve the Bylaws at their first meeting in August.</p>	
<p>Dissolution and Adjournment</p>	<p>A motion was made to formally dissolve the BOE in favor of merging with H&S to create to the new Leadership Council, prescribed in the Bylaws, and fulfilling the diocese and regionalization requirement. There was a second. The motion to dissolve the Board of Education carried unanimously via voice vote.</p> <p>June meeting minutes will be sent out to BOE members through email and once approved will be posted online.</p> <p>The meeting was then adjourned at 8:00 pm.</p>	<p>The first Leadership Council meeting will be on Thursday August 8, 2024 at 6:30 pm.</p>