

**ASCENSION SCHOOL BOARD
JANUARY 12, 2009 MINUTES**

PRESENT: Fr. Larry McNally, Mary Jo Burns, Lynn Fredrick, Nell Agnew, Chair Jill Pollard (08), Patti Farlee (06), Terry Thiese (06), Michele Joubert, Kurt Macky, Pat Hess (08), Wendy Schmiedeler (08)

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS: Nell Agnew was welcomed as an Educational Leadership intern. She will be working with Ms. Burns and assisting with Long Range Planning.

LAST MONTH'S MINUTES: Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

Fr. Larry is visiting classrooms on a regular basis. The parish is sponsoring a Peace and Justice service on Tuesday, January 20 at 7:30. The prayer service will address church life in the modern world.

The parish has continued to meet its budgeted fundraising goals, despite difficult financial times. Parish volunteers have organized an outreach program to assist parishioners who may be struggling financially. Volunteers donating their time for legal, financial, pastoral, and counseling services are greatly appreciated.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

Mrs. Wilmoth, grade 1 teacher, announced that she will retire at the end of the school year.

Ms. Burns will attend a meeting with the superintendent and area principals on January 14.

Open House is Sunday, January 25. There will be a continental breakfast for teachers at 9:00 a.m. New Family Registration will take place on Wednesday, February 18 at 7:00 p.m.

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS' REPORT:

Ascension School will have a table at the Parenthesis Preschool Fair this Thursday, January 15.

Open House is Sunday, January 25. Ambassadors will be practicing school tours on Friday, January 23 at 11:05. Anyone able to volunteer as a mock participant is invited to meet at the school.

Work to interface the fundraising and accounting software continues.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Jill Pollard presented findings comparing Ascension tuition to other area Catholic schools. Ascension tuition remains comparable and competitive with other Catholic schools.

Michele Joubert presented budget projections with various levels of tuition increase. These projections accounted for the diocesan salary freeze.

The Board unanimously voted on a 2% tuition increase, with no other change in school fees. The 2% increase was deemed necessary due to:

increased expenses in utilities, maintenance and benefits-related expenses.

decreased fundraising income in difficult economic times.

the need to protect positions and programs that enhance the school's excellence (aides, specialty classes, etc.).

uncertain and/or potentially declining enrollment.

This will be the smallest tuition increase in several years.

Extended Day Program rates will be looked at separately and suggestions for possible changes will be made in February.

The Board continues to look at ways to predict or incentivize preschool to kindergarten enrollment.

ACADEMIC COMMITTEE:

Lynn Fredrick provided the committee with surveys from 2008 graduates. The surveys ask students and parents about their Ascension experience and high school preparedness. They will be looked at in committee and the information disseminated to the board and faculty.

Wellness: The Wellness Committee met on January 8. They have disseminated the Archdiocesan Wellness Policy to various school constituencies and continue to work on helping those constituencies implement the Archdiocesan guidelines. Short-term goals for the committee include providing information and activities for Nutrition Awareness Month in March. Longer term goals discussed included a speaker series for families and other programs that will continue to educate the Ascension community on wellness issues.

Technology: No report.

Athletics: No report.

Long Range Planning: The committee will meet next week to initiate the planning process. Of particular study will be enrollment, space issues and possible all-day kindergarten.

Maintenance: Toilet repairs were made over the holidays. The interior gym door lock is being repaired due to a security breach. Wall padding in the gym will be re-anchored. A cross will be installed in the Pine Room and resurfacing and cleaning of the terrazzo stairways is being investigated. Bill Komala has agreed to serve on the Long Range Planning Committee.

PARISH OUTREACH / COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE:

Home and School: Home and School is organizing a coin collection for the Teach the Children fund. They will be present at Open House and are organizing Buddy Bowling and the Soc Hop for Catholic Schools Week.

ALMS: ALMS will kick off the year January 22 with a speaker presenting on “The Spirituality of Leadership.”

Extended Day: Neil Heskin will meet with Theresa Burns, Extended Day Director; Mary Jo Burns, Michele Joubert, Wendy Schmiedeler and Jill Pollard to review the Extended Day budget and determine future rates and fees.

District 97 Funding: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Outstanding Tuition Balances: Currently, the outstanding tuition balance is approximately \$200,000. Overall, it is increasing.

The board affirmed the collection procedure outlined in the current Collection and Delinquency Policy (No. 00-1218), specifically noting that families who are more than 30 days in arrears will not be allowed to pre-register for the following year during the first round of in-school registration.

The board discussed the option of accepting credit card payments for tuition and fees. A policy to accept credit card payments will be developed and published before final procedures are discussed and/or approved next month.

Registration Policy: The board reviewed the early childhood class offerings and the registration policy for determining class section selection.

Exit Interview by School Board Members: Current board members offered to make themselves available to exiting families who may wish to discuss their Ascension experience.

Open House: Additional reminders about dates and times were given.

Submitted by Wendy Schmiedeler.

Next meeting: February 9 , 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Center.