

**ASCENSION SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES: 1/14/08**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Father Larry McNally, Mary Jo Burns ,Terry Thiese, Liz Skalitsky, Peg Mackie, Patti Farley, Jason Allington, Mike Iannaccone, Dan Rodde, Craig Shannon, Mark Szaflarski

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

1/27/08 Open House  
1/28/08 US Representative from the Dept of Education visits for our Blue Ribbon award  
1/28/08 Commissions meeting  
2/6/08 Lent Begins  
2/11/08 Next Board Meeting

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**MINUTES:** Last month's minutes were approved.

**PASTOR'S REPORT:** Father Larry is visiting 5<sup>th</sup> grade this week. He is working on including a vocation program in the upcoming Catholic Schools week. He reports that the Archdiocese has not targeted Ascension Parish for any debt reduction at this time. Our new campaign will address future capital needs.

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Enrollment**

Enrollment remains even with one upper grade student leaving because the family moved; one student came into PK 3 this month.

**Projected enrollment for 2008-2009**

If the current student enrollment "rolls over" to next year, Ascension would have an enrollment of 500 students.

This projection is based on several assumptions:

1. All currently enrolled students will return.
2. Class size will not exceed the current limit of 25 students.
3. Preschool classes ( PK 3 and PK 4) will be at capacity, including the Multiage program.

Although the enrollment could stay level, tuition income will be less. Incoming Grade 1 will be smaller than the exiting Grade 8. Preschool tuition is less than tuition for students in Grades 1-8. Aggressive recruitment efforts and the Blue Ribbon award may generate more students, but it is likely that growth will be in Early Childhood programs, rather than transfers to upper grades. Further, some classes are full, and seats may not be available for families interested in enrolling children in Grades 5, 7 and 8.

**Budget/Tuition Rates**

Earlier emails contained information from the Archdiocese about anticipated expenses for next year. More than 80% of the school budget covers salaries and benefits. With anticipated salary increases at a minimum of 3.75% plus step increases for all current staff, tuition rate increases must be at least 4+% if enrollment is level or increases.

### **Personnel**

Mrs. Darlene Agner resigned her teaching position last week. She has taken another teaching position closer to her home. The new situation gives her the opportunity to take a part-time college teaching position in the south suburbs later in the year. Travel had always been a concern for Mrs. Agner, and the winter commute proved to be especially difficult. For now, qualified substitute teachers will take the junior high science classes. Mrs. Agner is willing to participate in an exit interview, and offered to write a summary of her experience at Ascension. She submitted grades for the second quarter, and left her lesson plan book, and a summary of the curriculum work that had been done this year. I have been in communication with the Office of Catholic Schools, and I am following all the required procedures for Mrs. Agner's replacement.

### **School Board participation needed**

Assignment for Board coverage of the Open House on Sunday, January 27 was completed.

The representative from the United States Department of Education will visit on Monday, January 28. The assistant superintendent will attend. The suggested agenda includes a school board member. Board Chair Terry Thiese will attend. All others are welcome.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The Anti-Bullying policy (2008-01-14) passed and is attached to these minutes.

### **DEVELOPMENT REPORT: Submitted by Lynn Fredrick, Director of Development**

#### **Marketing**

Bridget Cantafio, Marianne Walters and Lynn attended the Parenthesis Pre-School Fair on Thursday. Many thanks to Kelly Von Ebers who helped with our display materials. The fair is an interesting opportunity to look at the pre-school competition. One recommendation for future participation is that at least one school parent helps to represent Ascension.

The marketing folder with the stepped inserts is ready for distribution. We have updated the information from last year and added additional sheets. Last year we gave out approximately 100 of the folders at the Catholic Schools Week open house.

Invitations have been mailed to every parish household that has children two to four years old to invite them to several opportunities to learn about our school. We will host POLO on January 24 and have Early Childhood Open Houses on February 8 and February 12. On each of the February dates we will have sessions from 10 – 11 and 1 – 2. Ascension Ambassadors will be

working at these events. Ambassadors have begun to practice giving tours of the school and will practice at our next meeting, January 25 from 11:05 to 11:45. The Board is encouraged to participate.

We also have information in the Dome and in the St. Mary of Celle bulletin about these opportunities and invitations for the parents of older children to visit and/or arrange for their children to “shadow” Ascension students.

### **Other projects**

Peg Mackie and Patti Farlee met with five members of the class of 2007 during the three on three. Peg will have a report. Several students who were not able to meet on that day have expressed interest in sharing their thoughts. I’ll set up a date for that meeting this week and will distribute copies the surveys that have been returned.

We have ordered notebooks, pens and pencils and cupcakes for distribution to the children following the Blue Ribbon assembly on January 28 and are mailing invitations to the assembly and a reception following to special guests. We have sent press releases about the assembly (and about the geography bee results) to the local papers. We have ads in the Wednesday Journal and the Forest Park Review for Catholic Schools Week and for a special winter education insert. The latter will include a 250 word story.

The school newsletter will be at the printer in the next day or so and will include articles on: Heart of the School, Blue Ribbon assembly, Green Club, Great Books, alumna profile (Pat Cassin Graft ’49), Lent project, centennial book form.

The electrical work in Early Childhood was completed during Christmas vacation. The new light necessitated the application of some new paint. Additional work will be needed in both classrooms and the hallway between them but the space looks better than it had previously. AC units and window sashes have been ordered for the classrooms. (You will remember that the AC and the electrical is the expenditure of Best Use funds which we agreed on last summer.)

Runathon dates are set: Kickoff Wednesday March 19; Runathon Friday April 25. I’ve met with the chairs, Barb Fitzgerald and Jeanne Bowling to talk about ways to increase Runathon revenue.

Grandparents’ Day: May 2

Golf Outing: Friday, June 20

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

### **LIAISON REPORTS:**

**Finance:** The majority of the board meeting was spent reviewing the school budget and addressing tuition increases in view of expected increases in teacher and staff salaries and health care insurance. The Board agreed to continue work on finalizing the budget in the weeks leading up to the Open House. The Board thanks board member Mike Iannaccone for his work on

preparing reports for board review, and including various projections regarding possible tuition increases.

**Academics:** As noted in the Development Report above, interviews were conducted of 9<sup>th</sup> graders who graduated from Ascension to assess our schools preparation for high school. The Academic Committee will meet to review the findings, seek a written report from the Committee on Math and Science, and review notes from a prior Board's Homework Committee.

Submitted by Mark Szaflarski  
Next meeting February 11, 2008