

ASCENSION SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 6, 2008

Attendance: Father Larry McNally, Mary Jo Burns, Jill Pollard, Wendy Schmiedeler, Kurt Mackey, Michele Joubert, Craig Shannon, Dan Rodde, Patti Farlee, Neil Heskin, Mark Szaflarski

The Board welcomes new members Kurt Mackey and Michele Joubert.

The September 2008 minutes are approved.

Pastor's Report: information is still being gathered with regard to the Boards of Specified Jurisdiction. Father Larry continues to work his way through the school. A pit bull in the school neighborhood has been removed with the help of the Oak Park police. Father Larry is undergoing evaluation from the Archdiocese. The Board is asked to comment on his evaluation. Confirmation will proceed at the end of the month.

Principal's Report: All volunteers, including school board members must register for the Virtus training through the Archdiocese. Virtus training, along with background checks, are required to ensure that our children are adequately protected from any type of abuse.

They cluster meeting of the area Catholic schools is planned. Schools in Oak Park, River Forest, and Forest Park will share their enrollment information. If there is overcrowding in one school, the hope is to refer that student to another area school. The goal is to recruit and retain children in the Archdiocese. There are seven schools in our area and there are several cities surrounding us that have had school closures including Berwyn, Melrose Park and Maywood. This is part of a marketing goal to ensure that Catholic schools stay open in the future.

The gap in services provided to special needs students who are attending Ascension from outside of Oak Park needs to be addressed. Specifically, Oak Park District 97 must be prodded in order to insure that students at our school are getting their special needs met. Board member Pat Hess and Kurt Mackey will assist on this issue.

The scholarship policy is approved. The policy with regard to use of credit cards has been tabled. A change in the handbook which better explains out of uniform policy was reviewed and approved unanimously. The handbook will be amended and published on the website with regard to out of uniform issues. The new policy is more specific with regard to what types of clothing is acceptable.

Neil Heskin attended and discussed our school finances. The 2007 – 2008 budget was discussed and we will begin work on our 2009 budget shortly. Our Open House is scheduled for January 25, 2009, and we should have our tuition set by then. As in past years, the majority of our expenses are teacher salaries and healthcare. The Finance Committee will meet regularly with Neil and keep tabs on issues that come up with regard to tuition and enrollment.

The Academic Committee met and discussed student nutrition. The Archdiocese policy with

regard to nutrition was reviewed.

With regard to our Athletic Committee, Mary Planek has resigned. A replacement is needed. Father Larry is urging that the Athletic Committee resume regular meetings.

104 students are enrolled in Extended Day. We are benefiting from the assistance of Fenwick students who are assisting at Extended Day. The staff request that the Extended Day Room needs paint and new curtains.

Wendy reported on the "Strengthening our Schools Conference." The Archdiocese is making a move towards Boards of Specified Jurisdiction (BSJ) to replace current school boards. BSJ involve more non-parents in assisting with the school board. The use of these boards appears to be centered on struggling schools and insuring that outside neighborhood leaders are brought in to the school to assist in both fundraising and management. It appears that Boards of Specified Jurisdiction will be mandated by the Archdiocese and phased in over the next five years. St. Giles is already moving towards a Board of Specified Jurisdiction. We will continue to monitor the progress of St. Giles, along with St. Luke's and St. Vincent. This issue is delegated to the Long Range Planning Committee.

Additional information from the school will be sent home to parents with regard to lice.

With regard to our enrollment, we have a large eighth grade class and a smaller first grade class. We will need to work on retaining our Pre-K students. Our classroom size maximum remains 26 pursuant to the Handbook. We will monitor whether or not we lose children to the Longfellow all-day kindergarten program. The Michelle Joubert will gather class-size trends for analysis.

Submitted by Mark Szaflarski

SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

2008-09-08-002

The School's chief administrator with the Pastor and Director of Development will administer the Collins and Reese Family scholarships separately from the Parish Waiver/Scholarship program in collaboration with the families funding the scholarships

Submitted 9/8/08

Approved 10/6/08