

School Commission (SC) Meeting
September 10, 2020
6:00 PM

Present: Elena Gruner, Sara Volta, Barbara Spiering, Tara Charf, Dino Annest, Jackie Bryan, Jason Kadushin, Alison Morton, Karl Mowat, Molly Ward, Jennifer Wong, Erin Cassidy, Stephanie Combes, Greg Topf, Renee Kurdzos, Lori Ho, Karin Hansen, Michele Zinski, Fr. Oakland, Anna Horton, Jennifer Kokkonis, Beth Martin, Rebecca Lawrence,

Absent: Cheryl Benetti, Jill Carr

Opening Prayer

Father Oakland led the School Commission in the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The August minutes were deemed approved.

Pastor's Report

Father Oakland's focus has been preparing for school since the school is one of the biggest ministries. While virtual is not the way we wanted to start school, we are grateful that we can come together to overcome these challenges and are off to a strong start. Ministry plans are being revised for faith formation so not everything is online. We have asked for a date later than the normal February timeframe for the Bishop to attend Confirmation in the hopes that more kids can be present.

Principal's Report

Starting the year with Teacher Meetings has received a lot of positive feedback from both families and teachers – we are off to a **strong start**. Building preparations continue for when we return to the building, including adding hand washing stations and replacing drinking fountains with water bottle fillers. We have 135 new desks in the school hall to help us spread out across campus. The only equipment we are delayed with are iPads and Chromebooks.

Return Plans – Principal Horton continues to track King County numbers for an indication of when in person learning may be able to start. King County recommends we are in the "Moderate" phase for two-weeks before students return to campus, with October 1 being the earliest. Based on trends, Sept 21 could be when we move to Moderate. Catholic Schools are looking to have a consistent approach to back to school planning. As we start to come back, we will start with the youngest first and slowly phase in by grade. Social distancing, student cohorts and mandatory face masks will most likely continue until a vaccine is available.

Parents who are essential workers and need to work outside the home have had their students attend classes in person. This has been a great beta test for when we have the full student body back and what challenges there may be. Teaching new procedures, ensuring they are followed and become a habit, will take a long time to happen.

The SC held open discussion on what a return to in person learning could look like. A hybrid model is a possibility, dividing grades in half for alternating in person attendance. This would change what instruction looks like with a possibility that on remote days, students would be watching the in-person classes but just from home. This presents its own challenges for teachers and students with most SC members not in favor of that approach.

The general opinion was not to pivot back right away – it is too hard on families, students, and teachers. People have been impressed with the current virtual instruction model. Bringing students back slowly, starting with the younger kids first with the older students being the last to come back as they are more successful with online learning.

Principal Horton indicated the current plan is to bring students back 2x week. She has a few options mapped out but is cognizant that switching to soon will be hard for teachers as they are just getting into a routine. Teachers will be providing input into the planning next week.

Once we return, if cases spike, we will need to return to a fully remote model. There are concerns about creating a back and forth situation for children, especially as holidays approach with family gatherings, along with cold and flu season.

A SC Covid Sub-Committee will be formed to continue formulating a recommendation. The sub-committee will meet prior to the October 8 SC meeting in order to provide a report out to the full SC.

Enrollment/Marketing Report

We had 3x the average number of withdrawals this year due to COVID-19 and the West Seattle bridge closure. New enrollments have filled in many spaces, K-8 enrollment of 476 is only down 2% from the previous year. We made the decision to not offer a remote Preschool 2s class, as it is not developmentally appropriate for this age group. Those P2 families will be offered priority enrollment for next year. Many of the student withdrawals were due to a move out of the area, some withdrew because of remote learning (largely in Preschool), and a few due to concerns over COVID. We do have families coming to us asking about enrollment but are currently not filling classes to normal levels in consideration of when we will be back in person and accommodating social distancing.

We do continue to get inquiries about our program and feel positive about where we are. We are at the same space as last year with Kindergarten already 60% filled based on applications received from younger siblings and Pre-Kindergarten families. Planning is happening for a virtual open house.

Development Report

The Annual Fund is at \$18k collected with most of that coming from re-enrollment commitments.

The annual Magazine Drive starts at the end of next week and will be a softer launch than normal, leveraging a short video presentation to get kids excited. Registration will be as a family instead of individual children and each HRS child in the family will accrue all prizes at that prize level. There will be a restructuring of the prizes in response to parent feedback, including a donation to the Gator Fund as part of the prize structure. Instead of weekly class competitions there will be drawings in support of local businesses. The theme is Gator Strong! The goal for this year's magazine drive is \$50k, which is comparable to prior years.

Financial Report

With two months of actuals in, our total projected income is \$5.1MIL+ including PPP funds. All PPP funds of ~\$432k will be recognized as income in this fiscal year. Total expenses are projected at \$4.9MIL with depreciation of \$164k, leaving a very small net income projection. It is too early to have confidence in this trend after only two months of actuals.

Tuition collection is \$9763 below budget based on current enrollment. Reduced staffing costs from unfilled positions have been offset by increased expenses for handwashing conversions work, increased technology needs (new iPads) and changing two part-time positions to full-time.

There are concerns around ongoing risk with so many unknowns around enrollment, fundraising, BASE income, etc. The finance committee will begin meetings to dig deeper into planning.

Parents' Club Report

SPD is lined up for the October meeting to talk about online safety. Rebecca will send out a note to the group to with details.

Open Discussion

Volunteer hours: SC consensus is to suspend both the general volunteer hour and the fundraising volunteer hour requirements. Vice President Sara Volta will draft a statement on behalf of the school commission for posting on the Volunteer Hours site and in the EFC. That said, we are encouraging parents continue to volunteer hour, as we want everyone to be a part and participate as much as they can and feel comfortable with.

Closing Prayer

Sara Volta led the School Commission in the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned.