

School Commission (SC) Meeting
January 14, 2021
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, Karin Hansen, Michele Zinski, Fr. Oakland, Anna Horton, Jennifer Kokkonis, and Beth Martin

Absent: Lori Ho, Rebecca Lawrence, Cheryl Benetti, and Jill Carr

Opening Prayer

Father Oakland led the School Commission in the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The November minutes were deemed approved.

Pastor's Report

Happy New Year. It has been a busy few weeks. Transitioning off Christmas, we are getting ready to return to school and place a call to peace in this time of turmoil. Daily mass has begun, along with the installation of equipment for live streaming events such as Graduation and Grandparent's Lunch.

Principal's Report

Lots going on! New guidance for schools was issued right before the Christmas break, allowing schools to bring students back faster than expected. Preschool – 2nd will return 1/19 with a Monday thru Thursday on site schedule and asynchronous Friday. The COVID-19 workgroup approved a family pledge that has been sent to Preschool – 4th grade families to reinforce that maintaining safety depends on **all of us** making decisions with others in mind.

Tomorrow, a letter will be sent inviting grades 3-4 back with the hope of rolling invitations every two weeks after that. Principal Horton is looking at ways to bring grades 5-8 back with a hybrid schedule since we are not ready to have the entire student body on campus 100% of the time. Since teachers have been moved into Phase 1, those eligible based on the updated criteria can start to be vaccinated February 1st. King County Health has been clear that schools should be opening since school mitigation factors are working and they have not seen widespread outbreaks. Teachers are optimistic about the students returning, but it is a heavy lift for teachers to support in person students and remote students simultaneously as families make choices that are right for them.

How should families think about sports? Principal Horton's guidance is we are trying to lower risk while protecting our teachers to keep them safe. The Governor's guidance is if an outdoor sport becomes allowable, HRS cannot prevent students from participating and then returning

to school. The guidance is still restricting high risk sports so we should trust the guidance. We cannot put ourselves in the role of arbitrator.

On top of all this, next year we enter the self-study year for Catholic School Accreditation. We may have the option of getting a 1-year deferral but have been strongly encouraged not to pursue that option since it creates a backlog for the following year.

Enrollment/Marketing Report

Intent to Return was sent to families in December. 97% of families have said that they intend to return, which is on trend for prior years. The goal is to balance full enrollment while ensuring we can keep the class sizes that families expect and in which their kids thrive. As we look to enrollment for next year, staff is being mindful that social distancing may continue for a while as no vaccines exists for children.

While we currently have more kindergarten applications than spaces, it is fewer than last year and there is still uncertainty for what the spring will bring. The hope is to still be close to 500 students as we start next year. In support of that goal, a virtual Open House is scheduled for the end of the month.

Development Report

Annual fund is just shy of \$100k and we are on track for those who have elected to give via re-enrollment. Final accounting for the tree lot was approximately \$42k.

Auction – Families have been asked not to contact local businesses for donations and instead are being encouraged to purchase from them. This does impact our procurement numbers. This year we will take the cash donations and use those donations to flesh out the live auction category. We are looking to have about 1/3 the number of items for the live event that we usually do and strive to hit “Fund-a-Need” out of the park. Fund-a-Need will be centered around Teachers this year. Target date for the auction is the weekend of April 23/24, but Auction committee is still trying to decide if it will be Friday or Saturday.

The \$175 family donation to the auction is the lowest amount currently in the Archdiocese and has not been raised in 10+ years. School Commission is recommending raising the auction commitment to \$225 per family starting next year.

A callout will be made in the EFC to support the Fulcrum Foundation. The Fulcrum Foundation leverages financial aid to support and strengthen the 72 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle primarily through tuition assistance, school partnership grants, and leadership development. Fulcrum also provides funding for diversity and inclusion efforts, IT modernization, and early childhood education. Since its founding in 2002, Fulcrum has disbursed over \$38 million in grants! They are unable to have their largest fundraiser this year so are instead having a virtual fundraiser. They need to make \$2m to fund scholarships for the year.

Financial Report

While last year's approved budget for the 2020 /2021 school year accounted for a 2% increase for teachers, due to COVID-19 impacts and fiscal uncertainty teaching staff received no adjustment in salary. Forecast budget was based on 497 students and based on the restoration of P2s class.

The 20/21 budget actuals are tracking positive against forecast to date. However, as students start to return to in person learning, we expect costs to go up for cleaning, additional staff, etc.

- General reserves are \$1.3M, or approximately \$200k above 3-months of expenses run rate.
- \$340k is set aside for the roof from capital reserves (final design and cost estimate are in flight). Once we pull these funds out of capital reserves, the capital reserves account will be empty.
- \$43k is set aside for COVID-19 scholarships from the auction Fund-an-Need last year.
- Outstanding cost of \$15k for the Kindergarten doors (work has been completed).
- We will pull \$100k from the endowment to put toward the roof and P&L for operating expenses.

Tuition scenarios were reviewed by the School Commissions with the goal of presenting a recommendation to Principal Horton and Farther Oakland. 3 tuition scenarios were discussed.

Option 1 - Finance committee had originally recommended 0% tuition increase for all families. This would cause the preliminary budget to run in the red of \$126k. Parish finance committee has asked us to consider a modest increase to account for a longer-term financial viewpoint.

Option 2 - 2% increase for all families. This would create a potential budget deficit of \$47k.

Option 3 - 1.5% increase for all families. In addition to the tuition increase, an adjustment would be made to the multi-child discount. Yearly adjustments to the multi-child discount were discussed during tuition discussions last year and signaled to families that reductions would be made over subsequent years as part of a long-term strategy to ensure financial solvency. This option creates a potential \$51k deficit.

School commission vote resulted in a recommendation for Option 3.

Vote for recommendations:

Option 1 – 1 vote

Option 2 – 1 vote

Option 3 – plurality

No members abstained from voting. Any family members that are interested in seeing the more detailed presentation on tuition options, please reach out to Principal Horton directly.

Finance Committee has a goal to create a 3-year finance plan to signal longer term planning to the parent community.

Parents' Club Report

No parent's club report was submitted.

Open Discussion

Open discussion spent discussing Finances and tuition recommendations.

Closing Prayer

Alison Morton led the School Commission in the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned.