

School Commission (SC) Meeting
February 4, 2021
6:00 PM

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

Absent: Rebecca Lawrence, Cheryl Benetti, Jill Carr, Sara Volta, and Allison Morton

Opening Prayer

Father Oakland led the School Commission in the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The January minutes were deemed approved.

Pastor's Report

Across the Archdiocese, mass attendance is 1/5th of a year ago. Our parish is averaging 40% attendance with many people dialing in or streaming. Our streaming system is up and running and gives us a new tool to use in the future. For example, how can we connect with remote Grandparents in the future to participate in Grandparent's Day and create that community. King County is in phase 2, which does not have a significant impact to how we operate, but we are choosing not to open faith gatherings to minimize risk. Daily masses have restarted and are having 1 class at a time attend. We are finally starting to feel some sense of normalcy coming back. Financially the parish is doing okay thanks to federal funding.

Ash Wednesday has been modified for safety and Father will sprinkle ash on the top of the head instead of making the sign of the cross on the forehead, which is more traditional. A canopy tent will be outside for outdoor blessings with ashes, one at school pickup time for families that want to be blessed, and one later in the day for all that want to participate. It will also be the first day back for the 7th graders, and that will be the class attending in the church this year.

School Commission is seeking two volunteers to participate in the parish endowment group. Please reach out to Principal Horton if interested.

Principal's Report

Students through the 4th grade has transitioned back to in classroom learning and are settling into a new normal. The return rate is approximately 90-95%. Rainy weeks makes it a bit hard for recess and outside time, but that is part of living in Seattle. The classroom environment is different with kids needing to face forward and are a bit more regimented, so outside time is important. Principal Horton's ask is that kids come in with a change of clothes in case they get really wet at recess. Grades 5-6 return beginning Monday. The staff is getting creative with

outside space to support cohort'ing of kids, so older kids will do neighborhood walks after lunch. Depending on the end of COVID-19, we may have an opportunity later in the year to mix the cohorts. Alternate ideas for outside space were discussed: is it possible to close the street in front of the school to create another potential play area? Is it possible to use some of the parking lots across the street? Something to check out, especially since Microsoft Commuter is not running. Seattle Lutheran is fully open in person and is hesitant to mix communities, preventing us from leveraging their space. Jason Kadushin has provided a contact he has about traffic patterns.

Teachers are striving hard to meet the needs of the students at home while teaching to the kids that are there in person. All families have signed the acknowledgement to return. The administration's primary focus is to keep our school open, so we need to come together as a community. With the emergence of the new variants, it is hard to know what will happen. We are on several lists and trying to find ways to get our teachers vaccinated. The issue right now is supply, and we are still having issues with our teachers that are 65+ receiving the vaccine. Principial Horton is working her network to ensure that she knows when / if any clinics open, so our teachers get access when possible. We should all email the governor to let him know that not putting teachers into the first wave should be revisited! Vaccination will not be a requirement for teachers but instead will be a strong recommendation since it is an emergency authorized vaccine (EEOC issue).

This is Catholic School's week, and it has been a good week so far. We are already starting to look forward to next year, but there is anticipation that we should expect to mask still in the fall. There may be relaxing of social distancing in the fall to decrease to 4 feet, but it all depends on vaccine access and research on vaccines for kids.

Enrollment/Marketing Report

Last Sunday was our open house. All advertising this year was over social media, and we had 60 ppl RSVP, so a great turnout. Based on the effectiveness, Jennifer Kokkonis will stick with social media for advertising in the future. We have received positive feedback on our organization and ability for parents to hear from and interact with the teachers. Several families applied after the open house. We have accepted 50 grade K students (high number of siblings again this year). Reenrollment is almost complete with well over 90% of students reenrolled. Registration fees will be charged on the 15th. Financial aid decisions will be communicated at the end of February. Acceptances on grade 1-8 applications will be sent out the first week of March.

Development Report

Annual fund is at \$109k+, with a large amount of year end matching having come in November. The School Auction has over 200 items and we are forecasting a lower net amount due to fewer number of items to launch. The date has moved to late April (23 or 24) with Friday being the preferred night due to costs. The auction will be virtual again this year, and Beth Martin is assessing platforms for running the auction and looking for ways to step up the experience. We plan on communicating the *Fund an Item* to the teachers tomorrow, which will be special

contribution to staff for all the efforts they have made and make a nice way to wrap up Catholic School's week with the teachers.

The Fulcrum Foundation fundraiser brought in \$1.6ML on their event last weekend.

This year we were unable to have our usual Grandparents day but sent out a nice video for them. There was an ask for funds at the end of the video, but it has not netted much.

Financial Report

This is Tara's last year on School Commission and the topic of who will replace her next year was discussed. Jason Kadushin has offered to be the point next year.

We are still tracking positive on forecast to budget, but only because we received a PPP loan. 2 open positions will be posted (Art teacher and Counselor) soon; these postings were delayed due to the dynamic circumstances this year. A computer refresh is a large, planned expense that is coming up. As part of planning, we need to determine how much to earmark to cover capital projects after we account for a new roof on Lanigan gym (actively soliciting bids). Following that, the next big capital expenses are replacing the boiler and tuck pointing. Smaller items are outstanding as well, and we do not want those small things to pile up.

The Financial Committee's goal is to get to a multiyear budget forecast, including planned tuition increases. We first need to set clear goals for reserves, endowment utilization, and expectations from FamCom on capital expenses needed. A multiyear plan will allow us to provide a more predictable increase schedule to the teachers as well as parents.

How do we explore using debt to fund some of these capital projects? Interest rates are historically low, and a loan would allow us to spread the cost of significant capital projects across several waves of families. We cannot have the current families bear all the burden for these expenses as they have already shouldered so much. PRF is a saving and loans program that all parish's participate in. Most loans are on 15-year terms. We are doing lines of credit and Father is new member on the committee that approves rates. More research to be done on if that is an option.

Parents' Club Report

No Parent's Club report submitted.

Open Discussion

Report out from committees:

Marketing – Social media marketing was topic - what drives it. Could almost us a full-time person in order to fully leverage those platforms. How do we leverage students and younger alumni to amplify our voice?

Catholic Identity – immediate and future initiatives were discussed by the committee. There is a discussion on a push out to families regarding Lent, including prayer reflection books that are normally in church but not as available now. Can we send them home with families to provide family activities? Father Oakland will check on availability of the books. In EFC there will be a 5–6-week push, including videos from father and reflections from families, on how they live the tenets of Lent. The parish had great suggestions (with education) for how to celebrate Holy Week remotely.

Finance committee – see notes above....

Alumni Committee – discussed strategies to strengthen alumni engagement. During reenrollment there was a new section to gather information on alumni parents. There is a Facebook page for alumni, but only a small group are currently following. The committee is considering purchase advertising to buy leads or looking at other Facebook pages (like living in WS before it was cool) to find prior alumni. All kids who are graduating High School are invited back to HRS before they go off to college to come together one final time as a class. Sue Harris started that tradition, and the 8th grade teachers are continuing. We currently do not have an alumni category for enrollment but do try to consider that during the process. There is discussion on adding that as a status.

Closing Prayer

Karl Mowat led the School Commission in the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned.