

St. Francis of Assisi School Board of Education Minutes

December 14, 2023

Board Members Present:

Father Joe Pins (Pastor)
William Downs (Chair)
Brenda Pedersen (Vice Chair)
Steve Craig (Secretary)
Kaba Kayemba
Andrew Phillips
Phil Stover

Others Present:

Jeff Lynch (School Principal)
Jamie Zabel (Asst. Principal)

Not Present:

Wendy Henry (Preschool Director)
Thomas Call (Parish Council Rep)

Prepared by: Steve Craig

Called to Order: 6:25 p.m.

Adjourned: 8:05 p.m.

Location: Middle Conference Room

Minutes Prepared By: _____
Steve Craig

AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION/DISCUSSION	NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS
Call to Order & Opening Prayer	William Downs called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. and Father Pins led an opening prayer. Introductions were made of all those attending the meeting. Minutes from the November 9, 2023 board meeting were unanimously approved. William distributed to all board members a new SFA Board of Education Binder. He asked that board members review the Diocese of Des Moines Board of Education Manual, the Startegic Plan for Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Des Moines (published March 2019), Bylaws of the St. Francis of Assisi Board of Education and the SFA Parent/Student Handbook found in the binder.	Call to Order and Opening Prayer. November Board meeting minutes were unanimously approved. Board members are asked to review information provided in the Board of Education Member Binder.
Open Forum	There were no requests for an Open Forum at this meeting.	
Pastoral Update	Father Pins stated that he forwarded the letter to Dr. Ryan that was drafted by William Downs after our last meeting about concerns with the enrollment process and fee that the regional school administration requested this year and asking about plans for oversight of schools by the new regional school system and what opportunities parents will have for input to the system. Board members were given a letter from Dr. Ryan sent in response to these questions. In the letter, Dr. Ryan explained that Holy Trinity School joined the regional school system one year ago and formed a Leadership Council that oversees fundraising and school issues specific to Holy Trinity. Leaders of the Holy Trinity Leadership Council and their contact information were included in the letter. It was agreed that William Downs should contact leaders at Holy Trinity to learn more about the Leadership Council they formed. It was agreed that we should table the discussion on finding opportunities for parents to have input at the regional level until after the St.	Report from Father Pins. William Downs will contact leaders at Holy Trinity to learn more about the Leadership Council they formed to oversee their school and to work with the regional school system.

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	<p>Francis has formed their Leadership Council.</p> <p>Father Pins then discussed the current governance structure in place for the regional school system. There is an Executive Board currently chaired by Mr. Steve Lacy (Former Meredith Corp. CEO) that includes four priests from the Diocese. There is also a Members Board that includes all 24 pastors from churches in the Diocese. Father Pins is on both of these boards and Bishop Joensen has appointed Father Pins as Canonical Administrator overseeing the regional school system for the Bishop. There are also committees, including a Budget Committee that Father Pins also serves on. The Budget Committee is very busy developing the budget for the next school year. The goal is to finalize the budget by February 1, 2024 so administrator contracts can be sent out in early February to leadership at each school with teacher contracts to be sent out in late February.</p> <p>Father Pins then discussed planning around possible new building additions to St Francis that will hopefully include a new Early Childhood Center, a new worship chapel, and expanded meeting room space. The SFA Finance Council is discussing the need for a Capital Campaign to finance the project possibly in 2025. The earliest construction could be completed is fall 2026.</p>	
<p>Report from SFA School Principal Jeff Lynch</p>	<p>Principal Jeff Lynch discussed the following with the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Current school families have all confirmed enrollment plans for next year. There are very few openings. One challenge remains how to best fill kindergarten positions beyond the 50 reserved for Pre-K children each year. * The school is proceeding with the purchase of another AED device that will be placed outside the school office. WDM Police can help the school access the device for the reduced cost of approximately \$1500. * The gym floor will be resurfaced over the Christmas break. Hopefully, the work can include addressing new thresholds for the doors into the gym. * The Polk County Hazard Assessment is being conducted and the school is awaiting a report from Geocom on any building safety/security concerns. * School Administration has been reviewing the Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) and is exploring the possibility of bringing in a contractor to help train the staff on how best to execute their EOP. * There is a need to recruit a new 5th grade teacher. The job has been posted and advertised and two individuals have interviewed for the position. An offer has been made but still awaiting a decision from the applicant. * Today, Kids Care Director Rex Kromkowski submitted his resignation. He is leaving on December 29 for a teaching & coaching position at another school. This position will be posted and advertised for immediately. 	<p>Report from Principal Jeff Lynch.</p>

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Report from SFA Preschool Director Wendy Henry	Wendy was unable to attend the meeting. She provided William Downs a written report indicating that enrollment plans for next year are being finalized. All 3 year-old positions are filled and the only openings are a few afternoon Pre-K slots.	Written Report from Presechool Director Wendy Henry.
Board of Education Committee Assignments & Reports	<p>Members discussed rsults of recent committee meetings they attend as BOE reps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Andrew discussed the recent Home and School meeting. It was agreed that he should now ask Home and School leaders to attend our February BOE meeting to discuss future merging of the two boards. * Phil had no report from the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) Jeff explained that this committee oversees work on needed school improvements and the work of the Student Intervention Team. He will assist Phil in learning more about their work. * Brenda missed the last Building and Grounds Committee but William attended in her absence. He updated the board on plans to install new fencing around the school playground, hopefully during spring break. * Steve discussed the most recent Finance Council meeting held on 11/28/23. The focus was discussion of possible construction as detailed above. Work on the church's sound system had to be postponed to January. * Kaba is not aware of any recent meetings of the Technology Committee. Fr. Pins suggested he reach out to Diane Nitzel to see when the next meeting is scheduled. * William provided an update on the most recent Security and Safety Committee meeting. 	<p>Committee Meeting Reports.</p> <p>Andrew Phillips will ask Home and School leaders to attend to the February BOE meeting to discuss future merging of the two boards.</p> <p>Phil Stover will connect with Jeff Lynch to learn more about SIAC and how the Board of Education can assist with their work.</p> <p>Kaba Kayemba will connect with Diane Nitzel about the next Technology Committee meeting.</p>
New Business	<p>William discussed a few other concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SFA website has been updated to list the names of all BOE members. Contact information for William (Chair) and Brenda (Vice Chair) is included. • Should BOE Agendas and Minutes be posted to the SFA website for public access? Board members voiced supported for this step and agreed that when board minutes are approved, there can be discussion about whether any changes are needed to the version that is made publicly available. • Father Pins asked William to include information on the SFA website about Open Forum at BOE meetings. This should include explaining the need to provide at least one week's notice and the time limit for presentations. • William led a discussion about what issues need to be addressed when Home and School organizatuon leaders attend the February BOE meeting to discuss future merging of the two boards. In the interim, we hope to learn more about the Holy Trinity Leadership Council formed one year ago 	<p>After minutes are approved, Steve Craig will submit the agenda and final version of approved minutes from each meeting for posting on the SFA website.</p> <p>William Downs will post information on the SFA website about requirements for the Open Forum portion of BOE meetings.</p> <p>General discussion about plans for bringing Home and School leaders</p>

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	<p>that merged these groups at that school to see how this might guide and assist us with our merger plans. It was agreed that learning more about Home and School leaders vision for the merger and what concerns & expectations they have will be important. It was also agreed that we should reassure Home and School leaders that the merger does not need to interfere with current fundraising efforts and methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father Pins clarified that the goal for a new merged SFA Leadership Council is to have this completed by the start of the new school year in Augsu 2024 • Board members discussed questions that will need answers to help clarify the overall direction of the new Leadership Council. • Phil expressed interest and capability with developing organization structure and written communication. • Andrew expressed interest in helping to craft bylaws for the new Leadership Council <p>review the Diocese of Des Moines Board of Education Manual, the Startegic Plan for Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Des Moines (published March 2019), Bylaws of the St. Francis of Assisi Board of Education and the SFA Parent/Student Handbook found in the binder.</p>	<p>to the February 2024 Board of Education meeting was completed.</p> <p>Andrew – Will work with Home and School to understand their current structure and goals and will share information with Home and School officers that William receives from the already formed Leadership Councils.</p> <p>William – Will connect with other Leadership Councils to gather information and documents.</p> <p>Board Members should review SFA BOE Bylaws, the DM Diocese Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools and the DM Diocese Board of Education Manual as they pertain to SFA BOE.</p>
OTHER BUSINESS	<p>There being no further business, a motion was made and unanimously approved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.</p>	<p>Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm The next Board of Education Meeting is on January 11, 2024 at 6:30 pm.</p>