

St. Francis of Assisi School Leadership Council Minutes

January 8, 2026

Board Members Present:

Father Larry Hoffman (Pastor)
 Steve Craig (Chair)
 Brenda Pedersen (Vice Chair)
 John Cord (Treasurer)
 Mollie Mertens (Secretary)
 Jennifer Tracey (Volunteer Coord)
 Becky Baker (Fundraising Coord)
 Adam Mullinax (At-Large)
 William Downs (At-Large)
 Andrew Phillips (At-Large)
 Baylie Panzi (At-Large)
 Michael Perrin (At-Large)
 Thomas Call (Pastoral Council Rep)

Not Present:

Phil Stover (Communications Dir)

Prepared by: Mollie Mertens

Called to Order: 6:30 p.m.

Adjourned: 7:45 pm

Location: Saint Francis Science Lab Classroom

Minutes Prepared By: _____
 Mollie Mertens

Others Present:

Jeff Lynch (School Principal)
 Jodi Halligan (Vice Principal)
 Wendy Henry (Preschool Director)
 Jessica Hull (Auction Committee)
 Melissa Mullinax (Auction Committee)

Jessi Cline (7th Grade Teacher)
 Holly McFarland (7th Grade Teacher)

AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION/DISCUSSION	NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS
<p>Call to Order & Opening Prayer</p>	<p>Steve Craig called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and Father Larry Hoffman was introduced to the Council. Fr. Hoffman then led an opening prayer. Minutes from the December 11th, 2025 Leadership Council meeting were sent out electronically before the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Brenda Pedersen and seconded by Andrew Phillips. The minutes were then unanimously approved.</p>	<p>Call to Order and Opening Prayer. Minutes of the December 11, 2025 meeting were unanimously approved.</p>
<p>Teacher Presentation</p>	<p>7th Grade Teachers Mrs. McFarland and Ms. Cline presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs. McFarland- emphasized 7th graders advocating for themselves and reaching out to teachers rather than parents. Utilize both Google Classroom and Spring Board – one theme is choices so lots of discussion about making good choices. In Language Arts highlights include students 	<p>Steve and Jeff will discuss the request from 7th grade teachers to purchase up to 12 IPADS and bring a proposal back to next month's meeting.</p>

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	<p>sending an email to parents weekly + work on IXL and cursive handwriting. 7th graders also do a year end rap and music video and Shakespeare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading - all points throughout the year students have a reading challenge. Also always reading a class novel. Use research throughout the year with citing sources, poetry, vocabulary, journal and reflecting. ● Ms. Cline- 2 sections of math- Regular and Accelerated 7th Grade Math. Currently 7th graders are working on percentages and giving tips. They utilize Illustrative Math which is all online, no textbooks. Ms. Cline also enjoys using white boards around the classroom and doing group work. Approximately one-third of the students qualify for accelerated math. ● To combat use of AI, Mrs. McFarland has many checkpoints along the way. Students are encouraged to speak their ideas out loud. Also, they are handwriting some assignments. Lots of good conversations around appropriate use of ChatGPT occur within the classroom. ● Mrs. McFarland made a request for 12 Middle School IPADS. Due to new laws, students are no longer able to utilize their own devices to make their year-end rap project so they are now borrowing IPADS from elementary school. Mrs. McFarland felt many middle school classes could utilize the IPADS in their classrooms if we purchased at least 12. 	
Open Forum	There was no request for an Open Forum at this meeting.	
Treasurer's Report	<p>John Cord presented the Treasurer's Report.</p> <p>Leadership Council Account (2422): As of January 2, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beginning Balance (12/05/25): \$182,818.93 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slight adjustment from last reports ending balance ● Current Balance: \$180,542.82 ● Remaining Budgeted Expenses: \$107,661 ● Surplus: \$72,882 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Waiting on \$9,000 textbook reimbursement <p>Recent Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher & Staff B-Days: \$1,175 ● Staff Stipends for Extracurriculars: \$2,250 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yearbook ○ Lego League ○ Cheerleading 	

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Treasurer's Report (continued)	<p>Fundraising Account (2426): As of January 2, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beginning Balance (11/30/25): \$102,448.69 ● Current Balance: \$114,385.89 <p>Recent Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 2025 Auction GF to RF: \$11,937.20 credit <p>Items to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stipends for Extracurricular Activity Directors approved in April 2025 discussed. A suggestion was made to review the stipends at the end of this school year since this was the first year they were implemented. ● Request to approve an additional \$2,000 funding this year for the Activity Directors. Motion to approve by Andrew Phillips, seconded by Michael Perrin, was unanimously approved. This expense will be covered by school tuition dollars going forward. <p>Request to purchase new cones and amplifying microphone for use in parking lot Car Line – Total cost just over \$1000 to be paid using residual 2023 Fund-A-Wish account dollars. Motion to approve by Brenda Pedersen, seconded by Becky Baker, was unanimously approved.</p>	<p>Will review stipends paid to directors of extracurricular school activities at the end of the school year to see if any adjustments needed for next year.</p> <p>Use of an additional \$2000 in Leadership Council funds this year to help pay stipends for the two teachers serving as Activity (Athletic) Directors this year.</p> <p>Approved using residual funds from 2023 Fund-a-Wish account to purchase new parking cones and an amplifying microphone system for Car Line use.</p>
Fundraising and Development Report	<p>Jessica Hull Melissa Mullinax presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Joint Auction Planning Meeting was held with LC leaders on January 6. ● So far 215 guests have purchased tickets, this includes VIP tables and staff. Hoping for at least 300 attendees. The last day to purchase tickets is January 24th. ● \$30,000 in sponsorships secured so far. ● Working on logistics with getting vendors in and out of the school. ● Getting gifts on the website and promoting these online. Some fun items include: St. Francis night at Iowa Cubs on May 8. This will include three auction items- throwing out first pitch, hot dog gun, t-shirt gun, and three kids will be chosen for the sack race. Teachers will also be recognized. ● A family is sponsoring a dog to be auctioned at the event. ● 20th Anniversary of the auction- 1st ever chairs will be partnering and hosting a themed dinner that people can bid on. ● Working with Kylie- Will request attendees pay for any gambling items with cash to comply with gambling laws. Next year we will consider Venmo. ● If parents are unable to attend the auction it was suggested that they find a person who will be attending to bid for them. 	<p>Fundraising Report from Auction Chairs and Becky Baker.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Becky Baker is arranging for GiveSmart training before the auction. The version of GiveSmart we are using under an old contract is outdated so we need to look at purchasing the updated version before next year's auction. ● Decorator is ready and is very organized & is working with the caterer. ● A new parent agreed to take on the Kindergarten Photos Project that will be an auction item this year. ● After the auction another survey of parents will be sent for feedback. 	
Volunteer Coordinator Report	<p>Jennifer Tracey presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher and staff fund was collected for holiday gifts that were provided to all teachers and staff. This took a lot of work by volunteers. ● January 14th at 2pm is the next volunteer meeting. Will start looking at what volunteers need to be recruited for the upcoming year. ● A question arose about the \$746 left in the 8th grade budget and what it could be used for. 	<p>Volunteer Report from Jen Tracey.</p> <p>Steve and Jeff & Jen will discuss the LC funds allocated for 8th grade student activities and bring a recommendation on how to use these funds to the next meeting.</p>
Old Business	<p>Steve Craig presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encouraging school parents to increase contributions to parish – News & Notes announcement will come out on January 9th. Discussed pros and cons of including suggested donation amounts in this communication. ● December 21, 2025 5th Grade + 1st Grade Students & Family Mass – Attendance was good - over 300 cookies were served and families seemed to enjoy enjoyed getting to visit with each other. ● Promoting Faith Night Presentation on Safe Social Media Use: Ben Tracy speaking on 1-14-26 at 7 pm in the Parish Hall. It was suggested that we use EVITE to promote future events. ● Registration of New Students for SFA Preschool and School for 2026-2027. Parents should know by the end of the month about enrollment decisions for both Preschool and School. ● Challenges for seating all the attendees at School Christmas Concerts – Proposed solutions being discussed. Jeff & Jodi met with music teachers to discuss. Will continue to consider options, including possible use of the church for future concerts. 	<p>Old Business discussion led by Steve Craig.</p>

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New Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catholic Schools Week January 25-January 31, 2026: Speakers at weekend masses planned on January 24-25. ● 4th Grade Mass scheduled on Sunday January 25 @ 11:30 am – volunteers needed to help at reception after mass. 	New Business.
Executive Session	There was no call for Executive Session at this meeting	No Executive Session requested.
Closing Prayer and Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Father Hoffman led a closing prayer. There was no other new business to discuss so the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm. ● Council members were reminded that the March 12, 2026 Leadership Council meeting will be virtual. 	The next Leadership Council Meeting is scheduled for February 12th, 2026 at 6:30 pm.